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# A BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND VERSE

*Oxford University Press, Amen House, London, E.C.4*
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*Geoffrey Cumberlege, Publisher to the University*

# A BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND VERSE

*Chosen by*
WALTER MURDOCH
*and*
ALAN MULGAN

821.08

*Geoffrey Cumberlege*
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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W.M.

145186

## PREFATORY NOTE

To MAKE an anthology is to set up an unusually easy target for criticism. Anyone who is morbidly sensitive to other people's disapproval should choose something less dangerous than this very pleasant and (I should suppose) harmless task of making a garland of verses that he has happened to like. Previous editions of this book have by no means escaped censure; critics to right of them, critics to left of them, volleyed and thundered. They were damned for their omissions and damned for their commissions, for the beautiful things left out and the dreadful things put in. How could anyone who perpetrated such blunders dare to set up as an authority on poetry?

The answer to that is that I have never for a moment set up as an authority on poetry; I have left that to my critics. The book was simply, as I have said, a collection of poems which, for one reason or another, I had happened to like. My liking may have been a sign of execrable taste; but an anthologist, it seems to me, has to go by his own taste, not by the taste of anybody else, however gifted. With all its faults, the book, I believe, gave pleasure to a considerable number of readers; and I am incorrigibly unashamed of it. Whether owing to excessive vanity or to lack of it, I am not tremulously sensitive to adverse criticism.

That does not mean, of course, that one takes no notice of it. After long experience I have come to see that the thing to do with criticism is not to ignore

it, and certainly not to resent it, but to weigh and consider it. This present edition is, I hope and believe, an improvement on its predecessors; if so, it is largely due to suggestions by critics, to whom I am grateful. In particular, they made me aware of some excellent writers of whose work I have hitherto known nothing. A vast amount of verse is published every year in Australia. The anthologist can hardly be expected to read it all. I have little doubt that even from this edition some admirable writers are omitted because they have not come within my limited range of vision.

One marked improvement may be given special mention. I was always aware that the New Zealand section of the book was entirely inadequate; and I am happy to have washed my hands of it. It has now been entrusted to a well-known New Zealander, who will have to face the music over yonder. His knowledge of the literature of his country is wide and deep, and his choice has been well weighed. I rejoiced when Mr. Mulgan agreed to edit this part of the book.

W.M.

*Perth, Western Australia.*
*April, 1949.*

## WILLIAM CHARLES WENTWORTH

1791–1872

### 1 *From 'Australasia'*

Celestial poesy! whose genial sway
Earth's farthest habitable shores obey;
Whose inspirations shed their sacred light
Far as the regions of the Arctic night,
And to the Laplander his Boreal gleam
Endear not less than Phoebus' brighter beam—
Descend thou also on my native land,
And on some mountain summit take thy stand;
Thence issuing soon a purer fount be seen
Than charm'd Castalia or fam'd Hippocrene;
And there a richer, nobler fame arise
Than on Parnassus met th' adoring eyes.
And tho', bright Goddess, on those far blue hills,
That pour their thousand swift pellucid rills,
Where Warragamba's rage has rent in twain
Opposing mountains, thund'ring to the plain,
No child of song has yet invoked thy aid,
'Neath their primaeval solitary shade,—
Still, gracious Pow'r, some kindling soul inspire
To wake to life my country's unknown lyre,
That from creation's date has slumbering lain,
Or only breath'd some savage uncouth strain,—
And grant that yet an Austral Milton's song
Pactolus-like flow deep and rich along,—
An Austral Shakespeare rise, whose living page
To Nature true may charm in ev'ry age;—
And that an Austral Pindar daring soar,
Where not the Theban Eagle reach'd before.

And, O Britannia! shouldst thou cease to ride
Despotic Empress of old Ocean's tide;—
Should thy tam'd Lion—spent his former might—
No longer roar, the terror of the fight;—
Should e'er arrive that dark, disastrous hour,
When, bow'd by luxury, thou yield'st to power;—
When thou, no longer freest of the free,
To some proud victor bend'st the vanquished knee;—
May all thy glories in another sphere
Relume, and shine more brightly still than here:
May this—thy last-born infant—then arise,
To glad thy heart, and greet thy parent eyes;
And Australasia float, with flag unfurl'd,
A new Britannia in another world!

## CHARLES HARPUR

1813–1868

2

### *Words*

Words are deeds. The words we hear
May revolutionize or rear
A mighty state. The words we read
May be a spiritual deed
Excelling any fleshly one,
As much as the celestial sun
Transcends a bonfire, made to throw
A light upon some raree-show.
A simple proverb tagged with rhyme
May colour half the course of time;
The pregnant saying of a sage
May influence every coming age;
A song in its effects may be
More glorious than Thermopylae,
And many a lay that schoolboys scan
A nobler feat than Inkerman.

## 3 *A Midsummer Noon in the Australian Forest*

Not a sound disturbs the air,
There is quiet everywhere;
Over plains and over woods
What a mighty stillness broods;
All the birds and insects keep
Where the coolest shadows sleep;
Even the busy ants are found
Resting in their pebbled mound;
Even the locust clingeth now
Silent to the barky bough:
Over hills and over plains
Quiet, vast and slumbrous, reigns.

Only there 's a drowsy humming
From yon warm lagoon slow coming:
'Tis the dragon-hornet—see!
All bedaubed resplendently,
Yellow on a tawny ground—
Each rich spot nor square nor round,
Rudely heart-shaped, as it were
The blurred and hasty impress there
Of a vermeil-crusted seal,
Dusted o'er with golden meal.
Only there 's a droning where
Yon bright beetle shines in air,
Tracks it in its gleaming flight
With a slanting beam of light,
Rising in the sunshine higher,
Till its shards flame out like fire.

Every other thing is still,
Save the ever-wakeful rill,
Whose cool murmur only throws
Cooler comfort round repose;
Or some ripple in the sea
Of leafy boughs, where, lazily,
Tired summer, in her bower
Turning with the noontide hour,
Heaves a slumbrous breath ere she
Once more slumbers peacefully.

Oh, 'tis easeful here to lie
Hidden from noon's scorching eye,
In this grassy cool recess
Musing thus of quietness.

## JAMES LIONEL MICHAEL

1824–1868

### *The Eye of the Beholder*

If, as they tell in stories old,
The waters of Pactolus roll'd
Over a sand of shifting gold;

If ever there were fairies, such
As those that charm the child so much,
With jewels growing 'neath their touch;

If, in the wine-cup's sweet deceit,
There lies a secret pleasant cheat,
That turns to beauty all we meet;

The stream, the fairy, and the wine,
In the first love of youth combine
To make its object seem divine.

No golden sand of fabl'd river,
No jewel glittering for ever,
No wine-born vision's melting quiver,
In vivid glory can compare
With that which we ourselves prepare
To throw round that we fancy fair.

Never such beauty glittered yet,
In golden beams of suns that set
On cupola and minaret.

Never such beauty met men's eyes
In silver light of moons that rise
O'er lonely lakes 'neath tropic skies.

The world holds nothing of such worth,
There 's nothing half so fair on earth,
As that to which the heart gives birth:

External beauties pall and fade;
But that which my own soul hath made,
To my conception, knows no shade.

To every ark there comes a dove,
To every heart from heaven above
Is sent a beauty born of love.

The moonlit lake, the waving trees,
It is the eye which looks on these
That makes the loveliness it sees.

Out of myself the beauty grows,
Out of myself the beauty flows
That decks the petals of the rose.

So, when at Ada's feet I lay,
And saw her glorious as the day,
'Twas my own heart that lent the ray.

## RICHARD ROWE

1828–1879

### 5 *The Angel of Life*

Life's Angel watched a happy child at play,
Wreathing the riches of the blushing May:
His eye was cloudless as the heavens above,
But there was pity in her look of love.

The flowers he gathered bloomed their brief bright hour,
Then rained their petals in a silent shower:
The boy looked up at her with strange surprise,
And sadder grew the pity in her eyes.

## ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

1833–1870

### 6 *The Sick Stockrider*

Hold hard, Ned! Lift me down once more, and lay me
in the shade.
Old man, you've had your work cut out to guide
Both horses, and to hold me in the saddle when I swayed,
All through the hot, slow, sleepy, silent ride.

The dawn at 'Moorabinda' was a mist rack dull and
dense,
The sunrise was a sullen, sluggish lamp;
I was dozing in the gateway of Arbuthnot's boundary
fence,
I was dreaming on the Limestone cattle camp.

We crossed the creek at Carricksford, and sharply through the haze
And suddenly the sun shot flaming forth;
To southward lay 'Katâwa,' with the sand peaks all ablaze,
And the flushed fields of Glen Lomond lay to north.

Now westward winds the bridlepath that leads to Lindisfarm,
And yonder looms the double-headed Bluff;
From the far side of the first hill, when the skies are clear and calm,
You can see Sylvester's woolshed fair enough.

Five miles we used to call it from our homestead to the place
Where the big tree spans the roadway like an arch;
'Twas here we ran the dingo down that gave us such a chase
Eight years ago—or was it nine?—last March.

'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming grass,
To wander as we've wandered many a mile,
And blow the cool tobacco cloud, and watch the white wreaths pass,
Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.

'Twas merry 'mid the blackwoods, when we spied the station roofs,
To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
With a running fire of stockwhips and a fiery run of hoofs;
Oh! the hardest day was never then too hard!

Aye! we had a glorious gallop after 'Starlight' and his gang,
When they bolted from Sylvester's on the flat;
How the sun-dried reed-beds crackled, how the flint-strewn ranges rang
To the strokes of 'Mountaineer' and 'Acrobat.'
Hard behind them in the timber, harder still across the heath,
Close behind them through the tea-tree scrub we dashed;
And the golden-tinted fern-leaves, how they rustled underneath!
And the honeysuckle osiers, how they crashed!
We led the hunt throughout, Ned, on the chestnut and the grey,
And the troopers were three hundred yards behind,
While we emptied our six-shooters on the bushrangers at bay,
In the creek with stunted box-tree for a blind!
There you grappled with the leader, man to man and horse to horse,
And you rolled together when the chestnut reared;
He blazed away and missed you in that shallow water-course—
A narrow shave—his powder singed your beard!
In these hours when life is ebbing, how those days when life was young
Come back to us; how clearly I recall
Even the yarns Jack Hall invented, and the songs Jem Roper sung;
And where are now Jem Roper and Jack Hall?

Aye! nearly all our comrades of the old colonial school,
Our ancient boon companions, Ned, are gone;
Hard livers for the most part, somewhat reckless as a rule,—
It seems that you and I are left alone.

There was Hughes, who got in trouble through that business with the cards:
It matters little what became of him;
But a steer ripped up MacPherson in the Cooraminta yards,
And Sullivan was drowned at Sink-or-swim;

And Mostyn—poor Frank Mostyn—died at last a fearful wreck,
In 'the horrors,' at the Upper Wandinong,
And Carisbrooke, the rider, at the Horsefall broke his neck—
Faith! the wonder was he saved his neck so long!

Ah, those days and nights we squandered at the Logans' in the glen—
The Logans, man and wife, have long been dead.
Elsie's tallest girl seems taller than your little Elsie then;
And Ethel is a woman grown and wed.

I've had my share of pastime, and I've done my share of toil,
And life is short—the longest life a span;
I care not now to tarry for the corn or for the oil,
Or for the wine that maketh glad the heart of man.

For good undone and gifts mis-spent and resolutions vain
'Tis somewhat late to trouble. This I know—
I should live the same life over, if I had to live again,
And the chances are I go where most men go.

The deep blue skies wax dusky, and the tall green trees grow dim,
The sward beneath me seems to heave and fall;
And sickly, smoky shadows through the sleepy sunlight swim,
And on the very sun's face weave their pall.

Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead.

7

## *By Wood and Wold*

Lightly the breath of the spring wind blows,
Though laden with faint perfume;
'Tis the fragrance rare that the bushman knows,
The scent of the wattle bloom.
Two-thirds of our journey at least are done,
Old horse! let us take a spell
In the shade from the glare of the noonday sun,
Thus far we have travelled well;
Your bridle I'll slip, your saddle ungirth,
And lay them beside this log,
For you'll roll in that track of reddish earth,
And shake like a water-dog.

Upon yonder rise there 's a clump of trees—
Their shadows look cool and broad—
You can crop the grass as fast as you please,
While I stretch my limbs on the sward;
'Tis pleasant, I ween, with a leafy screen
O'er the weary head, to lie
On the mossy carpet of emerald green,
'Neath the vault of the azure sky;
Thus all alone by the wood and wold,
I yield myself once again
To the memories old that, like tales fresh told,
Come flitting across the brain.

## 8 *A Song of Autumn*

'Where shall we go for our garlands glad
  At the falling of the year,
When the burnt-up banks are yellow and sad,
  When the boughs are yellow and sere?
Where are the old ones that once we had,
  And when are the new ones near?
What shall we do for our garlands glad
  At the falling of the year?'

'Child! can I tell where the garlands go?
  Can I say where the lost leaves veer
On the brown-burnt banks, when the wild winds blow,
  When they drift through the dead-wood drear?
Girl! when the garlands of next year glow,
  *You* may gather again, my dear—
But *I* go where the last year's lost leaves go
  At the falling of the year.'

## 9 *A Dedication*

They are rhymes rudely strung with intent less
  Of sound than of words,
In lands where bright blossoms are scentless,
  And songless bright birds;
Where, with fire and fierce drought on her tresses,
Insatiable Summer oppresses
Sere woodlands and sad wildernesses
  And faint flocks and herds.

Where in dreariest days, when all dews end,
And all winds are warm,
Wild Winter's large flood-gates are loosened,
And floods, freed by storm,
From broken-up fountain-heads, dash on
Dry deserts with long pent-up passion—
Here rhyme was first framed without fashion,
Song shaped without form.

Whence gathered?—The locust's glad chirrup
May furnish a stave;
The ring of a rowel and stirrup,
The wash of a wave;
The chant of the marsh-frog in rushes,
That chimes through the pauses and hushes
Of nightfall, the torrent that gushes,
The tempests that rave.

In the deepening of dawn, when it dapples
The dusk of the sky,
With streaks like the reddening of apples,
The ripening of rye,
To eastward, when cluster by cluster,
Dim stars and dull planets that muster,
Wax wan in a world of white lustre
That spreads far and high;

In the gathering of night-gloom o'erhead, in
The still silent change,
All fire-flushed when forest trees redden
On slopes of the range;
When the gnarled, knotted trunks Eucalyptian
Seem carved like weird columns Egyptian,
With curious device, quaint inscription,
And hieroglyph strange;

In the Spring, when the wattle-gold trembles
'Twixt shadow and shine,
When each dew-laden air-draught resembles
A long draught of wine;
When the sky-line's blue burnished resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance,—
Some song in all hearts hath existence,—
Such songs have been mine.

## 10 *The Last Leap*

All is over! fleet career,
Dash of greyhound slipping thongs,
Flight of falcon, bound of deer,
Mad hoof-thunder in our rear,
Cold air rushing up our lungs,
Din of many tongues.

Once again, one struggle good,
One vain effort;—he must dwell
Near the shifted post, that stood
Where the splinters of the wood,
Lying in the torn tracks, tell
How he struck and fell.

Crest where cold drops beaded cling,
Small ear drooping, nostril full,
Glazing to a scarlet ring,
Flanks and haunches quivering,
Sinews stiffening, void and null,
Dumb eyes sorrowful.

Satin coat that seems to shine
  Duller now, black braided tress
That a softer hand than mine
Far away was wont to twine,
  That in meadows far from this
  Softer lips might kiss.

All is over! this is death,
  And I stand to watch thee die,
Brave old horse! with bated breath
Hardly drawn through tight-clenched teeth,
  Lip indented deep, but eye
  Only dull and dry.

Musing on the husk and chaff
  Gathered where life's tares are sown,
Thus I speak, and force a laugh,
That is half a sneer and half
  An involuntary groan,
  In a stifled tone—

'Rest, old friend! thy day, though rife
  With its toil, hath ended soon;
We have had our share of strife,
Tumblers in the masque of life,
  In the pantomime of noon
  Clown and pantaloon.

'With a flash that ends thy pain,
  Respite and oblivion blest
Come to greet thee. I in vain
Fall: I rise to fall again:
  Thou hast fallen to thy rest—
  And thy fall is best!'

## 11 *The Dominion of Australia*

(A Forecast, 1877)

She is not yet; but he whose ear
Thrills to that finer atmosphere
Where footfalls of appointed things,
  Reverberant of days to be,
Are heard in forecast echoings,
  Like wave-beats from a viewless sea,
Hears in the voiceful tremors of the sky
Auroral heralds whispering, 'She is nigh.'

She is not yet; but he whose sight
Foreknows the advent of the light,
Whose soul to morning radiance turns
  Ere night her curtain hath withdrawn,
And in its quivering folds discerns
  The mute monitions of the dawn,
With urgent sense strained onward to descry
Her distant tokens, starts to find Her nigh.

Not yet her day. How long 'not yet'? . . .
There comes the flush of violet!
And heavenward faces, all aflame
  With sanguine imminence of morn,
Wait but the sunkiss to proclaim
  The Day of The Dominion born.
Prelusive baptism!—ere the natal hour
Named with the name and prophecy of power.

Already here to hearts intense,
A spirit-force, transcending sense,
In heights unscaled, in deeps unstirred,
  Beneath the calm, above the storm,
She waits the incorporating word
  To bid her tremble into form.
Already, like divining-rods, men's souls
Bend down to where the unseen river rolls;—

For even as, from sight concealed,
By never flush of dawn revealed,
Nor e'er illumed by golden noon,
  Nor sunset-streaked with crimson bar,
Nor silver-spanned by wake of moon,
  Nor visited of any star,
Beneath these lands a river waits to bless
(So men divine) our utmost wilderness,—

Rolls dark, but yet shall know our skies,
Soon as the wisdom of the wise
Conspires with nature to disclose
  The blessing prisoned and unseen,
Till round our lessening wastes there glows
  A perfect zone of broadening green,
Till all our land, Australia Felix called,
Become one Continent-Isle of Emerald;

So flows beneath our good and ill
A viewless stream of Common Will,
A gathering force, a present might,
  That from its silent depths of gloom
At Wisdom's voice shall leap to light
  And hide our barren feuds in bloom,
Till, all our sundering lines with love o'ergrown,
Our bounds shall be the girdling seas alone.

## 12 *Bell-Birds*

By channels of coolness the echoes are calling,
And down the dim gorges I hear the creek falling;
It lives in the mountain, where moss and the sedges
Touch with their beauty the banks and the ledges;
Through brakes of the cedar and sycamore bowers
Struggles the light that is love to the flowers.
And, softer than slumber, and sweeter than singing,
The notes of the bell-birds are running and ringing.

The silver-voiced bell-birds, the darlings of day-time,
They sing in September their songs of the May-time.
When shadows wax strong, and the thunder-bolts hurtle,
They hide with their fear in the leaves of the myrtle;
When rain and the sunbeams shine mingled together
They start up like fairies that follow fair weather,
And straightway the hues of their feathers unfolden
Are the green and the purple, the blue and the golden.

October, the maiden of bright yellow tresses,
Loiters for love in these cool wildernesses;
Loiters knee-deep in the grasses to listen,
Where dripping rocks gleam and the leafy pools glisten.
Then is the time when the water-moons splendid
Break with their gold, and are scattered or blended
Over the creeks, till the woodlands have warning
Of songs of the bell-bird and wings of the morning.

Welcome as waters unkissed by the summers
Are the voices of bell-birds to thirsty far-comers.
When fiery December sets foot in the forest,
And the need of the wayfarer presses the sorest,
Pent in the ridges for ever and ever,
The bell-birds direct him to spring and to river,
With ring and with ripple, like runnels whose torrents
Are toned by the pebbles and leaves in the currents.

Often I sit, looking back to a childhood
Mixt with the sights and the sounds of the wildwood,
Longing for power and the sweetness to fashion
Lyrics with beats like the heart-beats of passion—
Songs interwoven of lights and of laughters
Borrowed from bell-birds in far forest rafters;
*So* I might keep in the city and alleys
The beauty and strength of the deep mountain valleys,
Charming to slumber the pain of my losses
With glimpses of creeks and a vision of mosses.

## 13 *September in Australia*

Grey Winter hath gone, like a wearisome guest,
And, behold, for repayment,
September comes in with the wind of the West
And the Spring in her raiment!
The ways of the frost have been filled of the flowers,
While the forest discovers
Wild wings, with a halo of hyaline hours,
And the music of lovers.

September, the maid with the swift, silver feet!
  She glides, and she graces
The valleys of coolness, the slopes of the heat,
  With her blossomy traces;
Sweet month, with a mouth that is made of a rose,
  She lightens and lingers
In spots where the harp of the evening glows,
  Attuned by her fingers.

The stream from its home in the hollow hill slips
  In a darling old fashion;
And the day goeth down with a song on its lips,
  Whose key-note is passion.
Far out in the fierce, bitter front of the sea
  I stand, and remember
Dead things that were brothers and sisters of thee,
  Resplendent September!

The West, when it blows at the fall of the noon
  And beats on the beaches,
Is filled with a tender and tremulous tune
  That touches and teaches;
The stories of Youth, of the burden of Time,
  And the death of Devotion,
Come back with the wind, and are themes of the rhyme
  In the waves of the ocean.

We, having a secret to others unknown,
  In the cool mountain-mosses,
May whisper together, September, alone
  Of our loves and our losses!
One word for her beauty, and one for the grace
  She gave to the hours;
And then we may kiss her, and suffer her face
  To sleep with the flowers.

High places that knew of the gold and the white
On the forehead of Morning
Now darken and quake, and the steps of the Night
Are heavy with warning.
Her voice in the distance is lofty and loud
Through the echoing gorges;
She hath hidden her eyes in a mantle of cloud,
And her feet in the surges.

On the tops of the hills, on the turreted cones—
Chief temples of thunder—
The gale, like a ghost, in the middle watch moans,
Gliding over and under.
The sea, flying white through the rack and the rain,
Leapeth wild at the forelands;
And the plover, whose cry is like passion with pain,
Complains in the moorlands.

Oh, season of changes—of shadow and shine—
September the splendid!
My song hath no music to mingle with thine,
And its burden is ended;
But thou, being born of the winds and the sun,
By mountain, by river,
Mayst lighten and listen, and loiter and run,
With thy voices for ever!

## 14 *Orara*

The strong sob of the chafing stream
That seaward fights its way
Down crags of glitter, dells of gleam,
Is in the hills to-day.

But, far and faint, a grey-winged form
  Hangs where the wild lights wane—
The phantom of a bygone storm,
  A ghost of wind and rain.

The soft white feet of afternoon
  Are on the shining meads,
The breeze is as a pleasant tune
  Amongst the happy reeds.

The fierce, disastrous, flying fire,
  That made the great caves ring,
And scarred the slope, and broke the spire,
  Is a forgotten thing.

The air is full of mellow sounds,
  The wet hill-heads are bright,
And down the fall of fragrant grounds
  The deep ways flame with light.

A rose-red space of stream I see,
  Past banks of tender fern;
A radiant brook, unknown to me
  Beyond its upper turn.

The singing silver life I hear,
  Whose home is in the green
Far-folded woods of fountains clear,
  Where I have never been.

Ah, brook above the upper bend,
  I often long to stand
Where you in soft, cool shades descend
  From the untrodden land!

Ah, folded woods, that hide the grace
  Of moss and torrents strong,
I often wish to know the face
  Of that which sings your song!

But I may linger, long, and look
  Till night is over all:
My eyes will never see the brook,
  Or sweet, strange waterfall.

The world is round me with its heat,
  And toil, and cares that tire;
I cannot with my feeble feet
  Climb after my desire.

But, on the lap of lands unseen,
  Within a secret zone,
There shine diviner gold and green
  Than man has ever known.

And where the silver waters sing
  Down hushed and holy dells,
The flower of a celestial Spring,
  A tenfold splendour, dwells.

Yea, in my dream of fall and brook
  By far sweet forests furled,
I see that light for which I look
  In vain through all the world—

The glory of a larger sky
  On slopes of hills sublime,
That speak with God and morning, high
  Above the ways of Time!

Ah! haply, in this sphere of change
  Where shadows spoil the beam,
It would not do to climb that range
  And test my radiant Dream.

The slightest glimpse of yonder place,
  Untrodden and alone,
Might wholly kill that nameless grace,
  The charm of the unknown.

And therefore, though I look and long,
  Perhaps the lot is bright
Which keeps the river of the song
  A beauty out of sight.

## *Mooni*

15

Ah, to be by Mooni now,
Where the great dark hills of wonder,
Scarred with storm and cleft asunder
By the strong sword of the thunder,
  Make a night on morning's brow!
Just to stand where Nature's face is
Flushed with power in forest places—
Where of God authentic trace is—
  Ah, to be by Mooni now!

Just to be by Mooni's springs!
There to stand, the shining sharer
Of that larger life, and rarer
Beauty caught from beauty fairer
  Than the human face of things!

Soul of mine from sin abhorrent
Fain would hide by flashing current,
Like a sister of the torrent,
Far away by Mooni's springs.

He that is by Mooni now
Sees the water-sapphires gleaming
Where the River Spirit, dreaming,
Sleeps by fall and fountain streaming
Under lute of leaf and bough—
Hears, where stamp of storm with stress is,
Psalms from unseen wildernesses
Deep amongst far hill-recesses—
He that is by Mooni now.

Yea, for him by Mooni's marge
Sings the yellow-haired September,
With the face the gods remember
When the ridge is burnt to ember,
And the dumb sea chains the barge!
Where the mount like molten brass is,
Down beneath fern-feathered passes,
Noonday dew in cool green grasses
Gleams on him by Mooni's marge.

Who that dwells by Mooni yet,
Feels, in flowerful forest arches,
Smiting wings and breath that parches
Where strong Summer's path of march is
And the suns in thunder set?
Housed beneath the gracious kirtle
Of the shadowy water myrtle,
Winds may hiss with heat, and hurtle—
He is safe by Mooni yet!





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Days there were when he who sings
(Dumb so long through passion's losses)
Stood where Mooni's water crosses
Shining tracts of green-haired mosses,
Like a soul with radiant wings;
Then the psalm the wind rehearses—
Then the song the stream disperses
Lent a beauty to his verses,
Who to-night of Mooni sings.

Ah, the theme—the sad, grey theme!
Certain days are not above me,
Certain hearts have ceased to love me,
Certain fancies fail to move me
Like the affluent morning dream.
Head whereon the white is stealing,
Heart whose hurts are past all healing,
Where is now the first pure feeling?
Ah, the theme—the sad, grey theme!

Sin and shame have left their trace!
He who mocks the mighty, gracious
Love of Christ, with eyes audacious,
Hunting after fires fallacious,
Wears the issue in his face.
Soul that flouted gift and Giver,
Like the broken Persian river,
Thou hast lost thy strength for ever!
Sin and shame have left their trace.

In the years that used to be,
When the large, supreme occasion
Brought the life of inspiration,
Like a god's transfiguration
Was the shining change in me.

Then, where Mooni's glory glances,
Clear, diviner countenances
Beamed on me like blessèd chances,
In the years that used to be.

Ah, the beauty of old ways!
Then the man who so resembled
Lords of light unstained, unhumbled,
Touched the skirts of Christ, nor trembled
At the grand benignant gaze!
Now he shrinks before the splendid
Face of Deity offended,
All the loveliness is ended!
All the beauty of old ways!

Still to be by Mooni cool—
Where the water-blossoms glister,
And, by gleaming vale and vista,
Sits the English April's sister
Soft and sweet and wonderful.
Just to rest beyond the burning
Outer world—its sneers and spurning—
Ah! my heart—my heart is yearning
Still to be by Mooni cool!

Now, by Mooni's fair hill heads,
Lo, the gold green lights are glowing,
Where, because no wind is blowing,
Fancy hears the flowers growing
In the herby watersheds!
Faint it is—the sound of thunder
From the torrents far thereunder,
Where the meeting mountains ponder—
Now, by Mooni's fair hill heads.

Just to be where Mooni is,
Even where the fierce fall races
Down august, unfathomed places,
Where of sun or moon no trace is,
And the streams of shadows hiss!
Have I not an ample reason
So to long for—sick of treason—
Something of the grand old season,
Just to be where Mooni is?

## PATRICK MOLONEY

1843–1904

16 *Sonnets—Ad Innuptam*

I

Thy throne is ringed by amorous cavaliers,
And all the air is heavy with the sound
Of tiptoe compliment, whilst anxious fears
Strike dumb the lesser satellites around.
One clasps thy hand, another squires thy chair,
Some bask in light shed from the eyes of thee,
Some taste the perfume shaken from thy hair,
Some watch afar their worshipped deity.
All have their orbits, and due distance keep,
As round the sun concentric planets move;
Smiles light yon lord, whilst I, at distance, weep
In the sad twilight of uncertain love.
'Thwart thee, my sun, how many a mincer slips,
Whose constant transits make for me eclipse.

II

Know that the age of Pyrrha is long passed,
And though thy form is eternized in stone,
The sculptor's doings cannot Time outlast,
Nor Beauty live save but in blood and bone;
Though new Pygmalions should again arise
Idolatrous of images like thee,
Time the iconoclast e'en stone destroys,
As steadfast rocks are splintered by the sea.
Thou shouldst indeed a hamadryad be,
Inhabiting some knotted oak alone,
And so revive the worship of the Tree
Which, by succession, outlives barren stone.
Though thus transformed still worshippers would woo,
As Daphne-laurels poets yet pursue.

III

Why dost thou like a Roman vestal make
The whole long year unmarriageable May,
And, like the phoenix, no companion take
To share the wasteful burthen of decay?
See this rich climate, where the airs that blow
Are heavenly suspirings, and the skies
Steep day from head to heel in summer glow,
And moons make mellow mornings as they rise;
As brides white-veiled that come to marry earth,
Now each mist-morning sweet July attires,
Now moon-night mists are not of earthly birth,
But silver smoke blown down from heavenly fires.
Skies kiss the earth, clouds join the land and sea,
All Nature marries, only thou art free.

IV

O what an eve was that which ushered in
The night that crowned the wish I cherished long!
Heaven's curtains oped to see the night begin,
And infant winds broke lightly into song;
Methought the hours in softly-swelling sound
Wailed funeral dirges for the dying light;
I seemed to stand upon a neutral ground
Between the confines of the day and night;
For o'er the east Night stretched her sable rod,
And ranked her stars in glittering array,
While, in the west, the golden twilight trod
With crimson sandals on the verge of day.
Bright bars of cloud formed in the glowing even
A Jacob-ladder joining earth and heaven.

V

O sweet Queen-city of the golden South,
Piercing the evening with thy starlit spires,
Thou wert a witness when I kissed the mouth
Of her whose eyes outblazed the skiey fires.
I saw the parallels of thy long streets
With lamps like angels shining all a-row,
While overhead the empyrean seats
Of gods were steeped in paradisic glow.
The Pleiades with rarer fires were tipt,
Hesper sat throned upon his jewelled chair,
The belted giant's triple stars were dipt
In all the splendour of Olympian air.
On high to bless, the Southern Cross did shine,
Like that which blazed o'er conquering Constantine.

## ADA CAMBRIDGE

1844–1926

### 17 *Honour*

Me let the world disparage and despise—
The world, that hugs its soul-corroding chains,
The world, that spends for such ignoble gains.
Let foe or bigot wrap my name in lies;
Let Justice, blind and maimed and halt, chastise
The rebel-spirit surging in my veins;
Let the Law deal me penalties and pains;
Let me be outcast in my neighbours' eyes.

But let me fall not in my own esteem,
By poor deceit or petty greed debased;
Let me be clean from undetected shame;
Know myself true, though heretic I seem;
Know myself faithful, howsoe'er disgraced;
Upright and strong, for all the load of blame.

## JAMES LISTER CUTHBERTSON

1851–1910

### 18 *The Bush*

Give us from dawn to dark
Blue of Australian skies,
Let there be none to mark
Whither our pathway lies.

Give us when noontide comes
Rest in the woodland free—
Fragrant breath of the gums,
Cold, sweet scent of the sea.

Give us the wattle's gold
And the dew-laden air,
And the loveliness bold
Loneliest landscapes wear.

These are the haunts we love,
Glade with enchanted hours,
Bright as the heavens above.
Fresh as the wild bush flowers.

## 19 *Wattle and Myrtle*

Gold of the tangled wilderness of wattle,
Break in the lone green hollows of the hills,
Flame on the iron headlands of the ocean,
Gleam on the margin of the hurrying rills.

Come with thy saffron diadem, and scatter
Odour of Araby that haunts the air;
Queen of the woodland, rival of the roses,
Spring in the yellow tresses of thy hair.

Surely the old Gods, dwellers in Olympus,
Under thy shining loveliness have strayed,
Crowned with thy clusters magical Apollo,
Pan with his reedy music might have played.

Surely within thy fastness, Aphrodite,
She of the Seaways, fallen from above,
Wandered beneath thy canopy of blossom,
Nothing disdainful of a mortal's love.

Aye, and her sweet breath lingers on the wattle,
Aye, and her myrtle dominates the glade,
And with a deep and perilous enchantment
Melts in the heart of lover and of maid.

20

## *Corona Inutilis*

I TWINED a wreath of heather white
To bind my lady's hair,
And deemed her locks in even light
Would well the burden bear;
But when I saw the tresses brown,
And found the face so fair,
I tore the wreath, and left the crown
Of beauty only there.

## JAMES HEBBLETHWAITE

1857–1921

21

## *The Symbol*

THUS pass the glories of the world!
He lies beneath the pall's white folds:
His sword is sheathed, his pennon furled,
Him silence holds.

The pilgrim staff, the cockle shell,
The crown, the sceptre of his pride,
The simple flower from forest dell,
Heap at his side.

And add thereto the wild-heart lute
The voice of love and twilight song;
Those passioned strings though he is mute
Remember long.

And move not thence his evening book,
The sifted grains of calm and storm;
And bow before that dust-strewn nook
And silent form.

To-morrow hath no hope for him,
No clasp of friend, no grip of foe:
Remember, love, with eyes tear-dim,
We too must go.

22

## *Wanderers*

As I rose in the early dawn,
While stars were fading white,
I saw upon a grassy slope
A camp-fire burning bright;
With tent behind and blaze before
Three loggers in a row
Sang all together joyously—
Pull up the stakes and go!

As I rode on by Eagle Hawk,
The wide blue deep of air,
The wind among the glittering leaves,
The flowers so sweet and fair,
The thunder of the rude salt waves,
The creek's soft overflow,
All joined in chorus to the words—
Pull up the stakes and go!

Now by the tent on forest skirt,
By odour of the earth,
By sight and scent of morning smoke,
By evening camp-fire's mirth,

By deep-sea call and foaming green,
By new stars' gleam and glow,
By summer trails in antique lands—
Pull up the stakes and go!

The world is wide and we are young,
The sounding marches beat,
And passion pipes her sweetest call
In lane and field and street;
So rouse the chorus, brothers all,
We'll something have to show
When death comes round and strikes our tent,
Pull up the stakes and go!

23

## *Perdita*

The sea-coast of Bohemia
Is pleasant to the view
When singing larks spring from the grass
To fade into the blue,
And all the hawthorn hedges break
In wreaths of purest snow,
And yellow daffodils are out,
And roses half in blow.

The sea-coast of Bohemia
Is sad as sad can be,
The prince has ta'en our flower of maids
Across the violent sea;
Our Perdita has gone with him,
No more we dance the round
Upon the green in joyous play,
Or wake the tabor's sound.

The sea-coast of Bohemia
Has many wonders seen,
The shepherd lass wed with a king,
The shepherd with a queen;
But such a wonder as my love
Was never seen before,
It is my joy and sorrow now
To love her evermore.

The sea-coast of Bohemia
Is haunted by a light
Of memory fair of lady's eyes,
And fame of gallant knight;
The princes seek its charmèd strand,
But ah, it was our knell
When o'er the sea our Perdita
Went with young Florizel.

The sea-coast of Bohemia
Is not my resting-place,
For with her waned from out the day
A beauty and a grace:
O had I kissed her on the lips
I would no longer weep,
But live by that until the day
I fall to shade and sleep.

## VICTOR DALEY

1858–1905

24

### *A-Roving*

When the sap runs up the tree,
And the vine runs o'er the wall,
When the blossom draws the bee,
From the forest comes a call,
Wild, and clear, and sweet, and strange,
Many-toned and murmuring
Like the river in the range—
'Tis the joyous voice of Spring!

On the boles of gray old trees
See the flying sunbeams play
Mystic, soundless melodies—
A fantastic march and gay;
But the young leaves hear them—hark,
How they rustle, every one!—
And the sap beneath the bark
Hearing, leaps to meet the sun.

O, the world is wondrous fair
When the tide of life 's at flood!
There is magic in the air,
There is music in the blood;
And a glamour draws us on
To the Distance, rainbow-spanned,
And the road we tread upon
Is the road to Fairyland.

Lo! the elders hear the sweet
Voice, and know the wondrous song;
And their ancient pulses beat
To a tune forgotten long;

And they talk in whispers low,
With a smile and with a sigh,
Of the years of long ago,
And the roving days gone by.

25

## *Day and Night*

Day goeth bold in cloth of gold,
A royal bridegroom he;
But Night in jewelled purple walks—
A Queen of Mystery.

Day filleth up his loving-cup
With vintage golden-clear;
But Night her ebon chalice crowns
With wine as pale as Fear.

Day drinks to Life, to ruddy Life,
And holds a kingly feast.
Night drinks to Death; and while she drinks—
Day rises in the East!

They may not meet; they may not greet;
Each keeps a separate way:
Day knoweth not the stars of Night,
Nor Night the Star of Day.

So runs the reign of Other Twain.
Behold! the Preacher saith
Death knoweth not the Light of Life,
Nor Life the Light of Death!

26 *The Muses of Australia*

SHE plays her harp by hidden rills,
The sweet shy Muse who dwells
In secret hollows of the hills,
And green untrodden dells.

Her voice is as the voice of streams
That under myrtles glide;
Our Kendall saw her face in dreams,
And loved her till he died.

At times, by some green-eyelashed pool,
She lies in slumber deep;
Her slender hands are white and cool
As are the hands of sleep.

And, when the sun of Summer flaunts
His fire the hills along,
She keeps her secret sunless haunts,
And sings a shadowy song.

She weaves a wild, sweet magic rune,
When o'er the tree-tops high
The silver sickle of the moon
Shines in a rose-grey sky.

But in the dawn, the soft red dawn,
When fade the stars above,
She walks upon a shining lawn,
And sings the song of Love.

. . . . . .

But, lo, the Muse with flashing eyes
And backward-streaming hair!
She grips her steed with strong brown thighs,
Her panting breasts are bare.

In trances sweet, or tender dreams,
  She has not any part—
Her blood runs like the blood that streams
  Out of the mountain's heart.

Her lips are red; the pride of life
  Her heart of passion thrills;
She is the Muse whose joy is strife,
  Whose home is on the hills.

Her voice is as a clarion clear,
  And rings o'er the hill and dell;
She sings a song of gallant cheer—
  Dead Gordon knew her well.

She checks her steed upon a rise—
  The wind uplifts his mane—
And gazes far with flashing eyes
  Across the rolling plain.

. . . . . .

Who comes in solemn majesty
  Through haze of throbbing heat?
It is the Desert Muse, and she
  Is veiled from head to feet.

Yet men the Mountain Muse will leave,
  And leave the Muse of Streams,
To follow her from dawn to eve—
  And perish with their dreams.

She passes far beyond their ken,
  With slow and solemn pace,
Over the bleaching bones of men
  Who died to see her face.

Her secrets were to some revealed
  Who loved her passing well—
But death with burning fingers sealed
  Their lips ere they could tell.

In silence dread she walks apart—
  Yet I have heard men say
The song that slumbers in her heart
  Will wake the world some day.

She is the Muse of Tragedy,
  And walks on burning sands;
The greatest of the Muses Three
  In our Australian lands.

## ARTHUR W. JOSE

1863–1934

27

### *Pioneers*

THERE *is no word of thanks to hear,*
*No word of praise to gain,*
*But we, that must, in sun and dust,*
*Tramp on across the plain:*
*We know not how the orders come,*
*Who bids the bugle blow . . .*
*But we, that may, track out the way*
*Our comrades soon shall go.*

Far, far behind our army drags
The wagons and the guns;
Along the line, beneath the flags,
A noise of cheering runs;
Full-seen in all the blaze of noon
Sets forth its proud array . . .
But we were up beneath the moon
And out before the day.

*Where age-long in the dank ravine*
*A swamp-fed forest grew,*
*'Tis we that hack the jungle back*
*To let the sunlight through;*
*Across the desert no man dared,*
*Up cliffs where none might win,*
*By down and dale we blaze the trail,*
*The highway for our kin.*

The noonday or the nightfall knows
The flickering of our fires,
The flung-down pack, the stretcht repose,
The talk of dreamt desires.

We camp, and go, and care no jot
    How soon, how far we roam . . .
But each camp-fire has marked a spot
    That men shall call their home.

*A sudden bullet flicks the air,*
    *A comrade slacks his stride;*
*Small time have we for surgery*
    *Whose errand may not bide:*
*Stanch, as you go, the jetting blood,*
    *Set teeth against the pain,*
*And feel the grip of comradeship*
    *Stir you to strength again.*

Ours is the shattering night-surprise,
    The crawl of lifelong days,
The slow set stare of aching eyes
    Across the drifted haze:
Lonely in hidden lairs we spy
    The march of stealthy foes;
What work we do, what death we die,
    Not even a comrade knows.

*By beaten roads the mainguard goes*
    *With banner and with band;*
*Yet we, that dare, find everywhere*
    *New work that fits our hand;*
*We know not how the orders come . . .*
    *But hark! the bugles blow:*
*Across the plain day breaks again;*
    *Pick up the packs, and go!*

28

## *The Sum of Things*

THIS is the sum of things . . . that we
A moment live, a little see,
Do somewhat, and are gone; for so
The eternal currents ebb and flow.

This is the sum of work—that man
Does, while he may, the best he can,
Nor greatly cares, when all is done,
What praise or blame his toils have won.

This is the sum of fight—to find
The links of kin with all our kind,
And know the beauty Nature folds
Even in the simplest form she moulds.

This is the sum of life—to feel
Our handgrip on the hilted steel,
To fight beside our mates, and prove
The best of comradeship and love.

*This* is the sum of things—that we
A lifetime live greatheartedly,
See the whole best that life has meant,
Do out our work, and go content.

## G. ESSEX EVANS

1864–1909

### 29 *An Australian Symphony*

Written in an Australian Solitude.

Not as the songs of other lands
Her song shall be
Where dim Her purple shore-line stands
Above the sea!
As erst she stood, she stands alone;
Her inspiration is her own.
From sunlit plains to mangrove strands
Not as the songs of other lands
Her song shall be.

O Southern Singers! Rich and sweet,
Like chimes of bells,
The cadence swings with rhythmic beat,
The music swells;
But undertones, weird, mournful, strong,
Sweep like swift currents thro' the song.
In deepest chords, with passion fraught,
In softest notes of sweetest thought,
This sadness dwells.

Is this her song, so weirdly strange,
So mixed with pain,
That whereso'er her poets range
Is heard the strain?
Broods there no spell upon the air
But desolation and despair?
No voice, save Sorrow's, to intrude
Upon her mountain solitude
Or sun-kissed plain?

The silence and the sunshine creep
With soft caress
O'er billowy plain and mountain steep
And wilderness—
A velvet touch, a subtle breath,
As sweet as love, as calm as death,
On earth, on air, so soft, so fine,
Till all the soul a spell divine
O'ershadoweth.

The grey gums by the lonely creek,
The star-crowned height,
The wind-swept plain, the dim blue peak,
The cold white light,
The solitude spread near and far
Around the camp-fire's tiny star,
The horse-bell's melody remote,
The curlew's melancholy note
Across the night.

These have their message; yet from these
Our songs have thrown
O'er all our Austral hills and leas
One sombre tone.
Whence doth the mournful keynote start?
From the pure depths of Nature's heart?
Or, from the heart of him who sings
And deems his hand upon the strings
Is Nature's own?

Could tints be deeper, skies less dim,
More soft and fair,
Jewelled with milk-white clouds that swim
In faintest air?

The soft moss sleeps upon the stone,
Green tendrils of the scrub-vine zone
The dead grey trunks, and boulders red,
Roofed by the pine and carpeted
With maidenhair.

But far and near, o'er each, o'er all,
Above, below,
Hangs the great silence like a pall
Softer than snow.
Not sorrow is the spell it brings,
But thoughts of calmer, purer things,
Like the sweet touch of hands we love,
A woman's tenderness above
A fevered brow.

These purple hills, these yellow leas,
These forests lone,
These mangrove shores, these shimmering seas,
This summer zone—
Shall they inspire no nobler strain
Than songs of bitterness and pain?
Strike her wild harp with firmer hand,
And send her music thro' the land,
With loftier tone!

. . . . . .

Her song is silence; unto her
Its mystery clings.
Silence is the interpreter
Of deeper things.
O for sonorous voice and strong
To change that silence into song,
To give that melody release
Which sleeps in the deep heart of peace
With folded wings!

## 30 *The Dreamers*

Have courage, O my comradry of dreamers!
All things, except mere Earth, are ours.
We pluck its passions for our flowers.
Dawn-dyed our great cloud-banners toss their streamers
Above its quaking tyrant-towers!
Making this stern grey planet shine with jewel-showers.

Our lives are mantled in forgotten glory,
Like trees that fringe yon dark hill-crest
Alight against the molten west.
The great night shuddering yields her stress of story—
The dreams that stir the past's long rest—
Strange, scented night-winds sighing on our naked breast.

Through all the spirit's spacious, secret regions—
By pathways we believed unknown—
Still thoughts immortal meet our own.
Ideas!—In innumerable legions!
Like summer's stir in forests lone.
Their various music merges in time's monotone.

The dreamer sees the deep-drawn ore-veins brightening
Through all the huge blind bulk of Earth;
He led the ship around its girth;
He plays, as on the pulses of the lightning,
The song that gives its workings worth,
The song foredained to bring man's morrow to the birth.

Base, base mere doers, blind and dreamless;
Whose bodies engines are of toil!
Greasy with greed and lust they moil;
They cast lots for the dreamer's garment seamless,
To rot among their useless spoil;
The fathomless infinity their breath does soil.

Hail to the dream that roused the sleeping savage,
And led him from his bloody lair,
Across light's bridge, that single hair,
Above th' unpurposed, eyeless hell of ravage
That, beasts and men, the soulless share,
And left him, waking in thought's temple, Heaven's heir!

Our souls, in these vast Heavens unbeholden
Of eyes, our angel-hopes embrace;
Or being's shining trail retrace,
Through pregnant skies about our forms enfolden
In rapture of our kindred race,
Until the gaze of God consume us, face to face.

Ah, God! In what undying dream of beauty
Wrought'st Thou our world, so strange and fair,
Afloat in Thy illusive air?—
Aye me! We know that dreaming is our duty!
These dreams more intimate than prayer;
For in Thy dream divine our laureate spirits share.

31

## *White Paper*

Snowy-smooth beneath the pen—
  Richest field that iron ploughs,
Germinating thoughts of men,
  Tho' no heaven its rain allows.

There they ripen, thousand-fold;
  And our spirits reap the corn,
In a day-long dream of gold—
  Food for all the souls unborn.

Like the murmur of the earth,
  When we listen stooping low,
Like sap singing nature's mirth
  Foaming up the trees that grow.

Evermore a subtle song
  Sings the pen unto it, while
Fluid idea flows along,
  Each new Era's mother-Nile.

Greater than ensphering Sea,
  For it holds the sea and land;
Seed of every deed to be
  Down its current borne like sand.

I caress thy surface sheer,
  Holding thee the Absolute;
Where the things to be inhere,
  Waiting their material bruit.

How I love thee! my heart's blood
  Were too dull to smutch thy white!
I'll aver: no lily's bud
  Lays such unction on my sight.

Suave of maiden's throat or arm,
  Bliss embodied to the touch,
Has not such ambrosial charm—
  Not a marble Goddess such!

Dear White Paper! All To-day
  Palpitates with spirit-heat—
Only on thy whiteness may
  Seers translate its rhythms sweet!

Holy Paper! all the Past
  Were a rack of ruined cloud
Stripping from our orbit vast,
  But thee Eternity endowed

With an actual soul of speech—
  Life of life by death distilled—
That all dateless days shall reach,
  As life's vine of veins is filled.

O, the glorious Heavens wrought
  By Cadmean souls of yore
From pure element of Thought!
  And thy leaves their silvern door!

Light they open, and we stand
  Past the sovereignty of Fate;
Glad among Them, still and grand,
  The Creators and Create!

## 32 *The Mallee Fire*

I SUPPOSE it just depends on where you're raised.
  Once I met a cove as swore by green belar!
Couldn't sight the good old mallee-stump I praised;
  Well!—I couldn't sight belar, and there you are!
But the faces in the fire where the mallee-stump 's
    a-blinking
Are the friendliest I ever seen, to my way o' thinking!

In the city, where the fires is mostly coal—
  There! I can't a-bear to go and warm my feet!
Spitting, fizzing things as hasn't got no soul—
  Things as puffs out yaller smoke instead of heat!
But at home—well, it *is* home when the mallee-stump 's
    a-burning,
And the evenin 's drawing chilly, and the season 's
    a-turning.

And there 's some as runs 'em down because they're
    tough.
  Well? And what 's the good of anythink as ain't?
No. It 's nary use to serve 'em any bluff,
  For they'd use up all the patience of a saint.
But they'll split as sweet as sugar if you know the
    way to take 'em;
If you don't, there isn't nothink in the world as'll
    make 'em.

They're tremenjust hard to kindle, though, at first:
  Like a friendship of the kind that comes to stay.
You can blow and blow and blow until you burst,
  And when they won't they *won't* burn, anyway!
But when once they gets a start, though they make
    no showy flashes,
Well, they'll serve you true and honest to the last
    pinch of ashes!

## 33 *Bound for Sourabaya!*

Oh, the moon shines bright, and we sail to-night,
  And we're bound for Sourabaya!
So it 's 'Farewell, Jane!' for we're off again
  With the turning of the tide!
Oh, the Java girls haven't got no curls,
  But they'll meet us on the Praya,
And, Malay or Dutch, well, the odds ain't much,
  And the ocean 's deep and wide!

    We're bound for Sourabaya, boys,
      Where the girls are kind and brown!
    By the break of day we'll be far away;
      Farewell to Sydney town!

Oh, the girls look glum, when the parting 's come,
  And we're bound for Sourabaya!
And they weep and wail, cos' the ship must sail
  With the turning of the tide!
But we soon forget, when our sheets are wet
  And the dancing dolphins play-ah,
And the gale pipes high in the mackerel sky,
  And the ocean 's deep and wide!

We're bound for Sourabaya, boys,
Where the girls are kind and brown!
And they hope and pray we've come to stay!
Farewell to Sydney town!

When the coin 's all gone, and the hatches on,
And we're bound for Sourabaya,
There 's a kiss for Nell, and a long farewell,
With the turning of the tide!
But there 's not much wrong, and it don't last long,
Though she mourns for you a day-ah;
And she wears no black if you don't come back!
For the ocean 's deep and wide!

And we're bound for Sourabaya, boys,
Where the girls are kind and brown,
So we'll drink once more, while we're on the shore,
Farewell to Sydney town!

## ANDREW BARTON PATERSON

1865–1941

### 34 *Clancy of The Overflow*

I HAD written him a letter which I had, for want of better
Knowledge, sent to where I met him down the Lachlan, years ago;
He was shearing when I knew him, so I sent the letter to him,
Just on spec, addressed as follows, 'Clancy, of The Overflow.'

And an answer came directed in a writing unexpected
(And I think the same was written with a thumb-nail dipped in tar);
'Twas his shearing mate who wrote it, and *verbatim*
I will quote it:
'Clancy 's gone to Queensland droving, and we don't know where he are.'

. . . . . .

In my wild erratic fancy visions come to me of Clancy
Gone a-droving 'down the Cooper' where the Western drovers go;
As the stock are slowly stringing, Clancy rides behind them singing,
For the drover's life has pleasures that the townsfolk never know.

And the bush has friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,
And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,
And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.

. . . . . .

I am sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy
Ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses tall,
And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city,
Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over all.

And in place of lowing cattle, I can hear the fiendish rattle
Of the tramways and the 'buses making hurry down the street;
And the language uninviting of the gutter children fighting
Comes fitfully and faintly through the ceaseless tramp of feet.

And the hurrying people daunt me, and their pallid faces haunt me
As they shoulder one another in their rush and nervous haste,
With their eager eyes and greedy, and their stunted forms and weedy,
For townsfolk have no time to grow, they have no time to waste.

And I somehow rather fancy that I'd like to change with Clancy,
Like to take a turn at droving where the seasons come and go,

While he faced the round eternal of the cash-book and the journal—
But I doubt he'd suit the office, Clancy, of The Overflow.

35

## *On Kiley's Run*

THE roving breezes come and go
On Kiley's Run,
The sleepy river murmurs low,
And far away one dimly sees
Beyond the stretch of forest trees—
Beyond the foothills dusk and dun—
The ranges sleeping in the sun
On Kiley's Run.

'Tis many years since first I came
To Kiley's Run.
More years than I would care to name
Since I, a stripling, used to ride
For miles and miles at Kiley's side,
The while in stirring tones he told
The stories of the days of old
On Kiley's Run.

I see the old bush homestead now
On Kiley's Run,
Just nestled down beneath the brow
Of one small ridge above the sweep
Of river-flat, where willows weep
And jasmine flowers and roses bloom:
The air was laden with perfume
On Kiley's Run.

We lived the good old station life
On Kiley's Run,
With little thought of care or strife.
Old Kiley seldom used to roam,
He liked to make the Run his home;

The swagman never turned away
With empty hand at close of day
From Kiley's Run.

We kept a racehorse now and then
On Kiley's Run,
And neighbouring stations brought their men
To meetings where the sport was free,
And dainty ladies came to see
Their champions ride; with laugh and song
The old house rang the whole night long
On Kiley's Run.

The station hands were friends, I wot,
On Kiley's Run,
A reckless, merry-hearted lot—
All splendid riders, and they knew
The boss was kindness through and through;
Old Kiley always stood their friend,
And so they served him to the end
On Kiley's Run.

But droughts and losses came apace
To Kiley's Run,
Till ruin stared him in the face;
He toiled and toiled while lived the light,
He dreamed of overdrafts at night:
At length, because he could not pay,
His bankers took the stock away
From Kiley's Run.

Old Kiley stood and saw them go
From Kiley's Run.
The well-bred cattle marching slow;

His stockmen, mates for many a day,
They wrung his hand and went away.
Too old to make another start,
Old Kiley died—of broken heart,
On Kiley's Run.

. . . . . .

The owner lives in England now
Of Kiley's Run.
He knows a racehorse from a cow;
But that is all he knows of stock:
His chiefest care is how to dock
Expenses, and he sends from town
To cut the shearers' wages down
On Kiley's Run.

There are no neighbours anywhere
Near Kiley's Run.
The hospitable homes are bare,
The gardens gone; for no pretence
Must hinder cutting down expense;
The homestead that we held so dear
Contains a half-paid overseer
On Kiley's Run.

All life and sport and hope have died
On Kiley's Run.
No longer there the stockmen ride;
For sour-faced boundary riders creep
On mongrel horses after sheep,
Through ranges where, at racing speed,
Old Kiley used to 'wheel the lead'
On Kiley's Run.

There runs a lane for thirty miles
Through Kiley's Run.
On either side the herbage smiles,
But wretched travelling sheep must pass
Without a drink or blade of grass
Through that long lane of death and shame;
The weary drovers curse the name
Of Kiley's Run.

The name itself is changed of late
Of Kiley's Run.
They call it 'Chandos Park Estate.'
The lonely swagman through the dark
Must hump his swag past Chandos Park—
The name is English, don't you see,
The old name sweeter sounds to me
Of 'Kiley's Run.'

I cannot guess what fate will bring
To Kiley's Run—
For changes come and changes ring—
I scarcely think 'twill always be
Locked up to suit an absentee;
And if he lets it out in farms
His tenants soon will carry arms
On Kiley's Run.

## 36 *A Bushman's Song*

I'm travellin' down the Castlereagh, and I'm a station-hand,
I'm handy with the ropin' pole, I'm handy with the brand,
And I can ride a rowdy colt, or swing the axe all day,
But there 's no demand for a station-hand along the Castlereagh.

So it 's shift, boys, shift, for there isn't the slightest doubt
That we've got to make a shift to the stations further out,
With the pack horse runnin' after, for he follows like a dog,
We must strike across the country at the old jig-jog.

This old black horse I'm ridin'—if you'll notice what's his brand,
He wears the Crooked R, you see—none better in the land.
He takes a lot of beatin', and the other day we tried,
For a bit of a joke, with a racing bloke, for twenty pound a side.

It was shift, boys, shift, for there wasn't the slightest doubt
That I had to make him shift, for the money was nearly out,
But he cantered home a winner, with the other one at the flog—
He 's a red-hot sort to pick up with his old jig-jog.

I asked a cove for shearin' once along the Marthaguy:
'We shear non-union here,' says he. 'I call it scab,' says I.
I looked along the shearin' floor before I turned to go—
There were eight or ten dashed Chinamen a-shearin' in a row.

It was shift, boys, shift, for there wasn't the slightest doubt
It was time to make a shift with the leprosy about.
So I saddled up my horses, and I whistled to my dog,
And I left his scabby station at the old jig-jog.

I went to Illawarra, where my brother 's got a farm;
He has to ask his landlord's leave before he lifts his arm:
The landlord owns the country-side—man, woman, dog, and cat,
They haven't the cheek to dare to speak without they touch their hat.

It was shift, boys, shift, for there wasn't the slightest doubt
Their little landlord god and I would soon have fallen out;
Was I to touch my hat to him?—was I his bloomin' dog?
So I makes for up the country at the old jig-jog.

But it 's time that I was movin', I've a mighty way to go
Till I drink artesian water from a thousand feet below;

Till I meet the overlanders with the cattle comin' down—
And I'll work a while till I make a pile, then have a spree in town.

So, it 's shift, boys, shift, for there isn't the slightest doubt
We've got to make a shift to the stations further out:
The pack horse runs behind us, for he follows like a dog,
And we cross a lot of country at the old jig-jog.

## 37 *Waltzing Matilda*

Oh! there once was a swagman camped in the billabong,
Under the shade of a Coolabah tree;
And he sang as he looked at his old billy boiling,
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda, my darling,
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?
Waltzing Matilda and leading a water-bag—
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the water-hole,
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him in glee;
And he sang as he stowed him away in his tucker-bag,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

Down came the Squatter a-riding his thoroughbred;
Down came Policemen—one, two, three.
"Whose is the jumbuck you've got in the tucker-bag?
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me."

But the swagman, he up and he jumped in the water-
hole,
Drowning himself by the Coolabah tree;
And his ghost may be heard as it sings in the billa-
bong,
"Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?"

## WILLIAM GAY

1865–1897

### 38 *To M.*

If in the summer of thy bright regard
For one brief season these poor Rhymes shall live
I ask no more, nor think my fate too hard
If other eyes but wintry looks should give;
Nor will I grieve though what I here have writ
O'erburdened Time should drop among the ways,
And to the unremembering dust commit
Beyond the praise and blame of other days:
The song doth pass, but I who sing, remain,
I pluck from Death's own heart a life more deep,
And as the Spring, that dies not, in her train
Doth scatter blossoms for the Winds to reap,
So I, immortal, as I fare along,
Will strew my path with mortal flowers of song.

### 39 *Australia, 1894*

She sits a queen whom none shall dare despoil,
Her crown the sun, her guard the vigilant sea,
And round her throne are gathered, stalwart, free,
A people proud, yet stooping to the soil,
Patient to swell her greatness with their toil,
And swift to leave, should dire occasion be,

The mine, the flock, the desk, the furrowed lea,
And force the invader to a dark recoil.—
Yet as she gazes o'er the plains that lie
  Fruitful about her throne, she sighs full sore
To see the barriers Greed has builded high,
  Dividing them who brothers were before,
When still they dwelt beneath a sterner sky
  And heard the thunders of a wilder shore.

## 40 *Australian Federation*

From all division let our land be free,
  For God has made her one: complete she lies
  Within the unbroken circle of the skies,
And round her indivisible the sea
Breaks on her single shore; while only we,
  Her foster children, bound with sacred ties
  Of one dear blood, one storied enterprise,
Are negligent of her integrity.—
Her seamless garment, at great Mammon's nod,
  With hands unfilial we have basely rent,
  With petty variance our souls are spent,
And ancient kinship underfoot is trod:
  O let us rise, united, penitent,
And be one people,—mighty, serving God!

41

## *The Crazy World*

THE world did say to me,
'My bread thou shalt not eat,
I have no place for thee
In house nor field nor street.

'I have on land nor sea
For thee nor home nor bread,
I scarce can give to thee
A grave when thou art dead.'

'O crazy World,' said I,
'What is it thou canst give,
Which wanting, I must die,
Or having, I shall live?

'When thou thy all hast spent,
And all thy harvests cease,
I still have nutriment
That groweth by decrease.

'Thy streets will pass away,
Thy towers of steel be rust,
Thy heights to plains decay,
Thyself be wandering dust;

'But I go ever on
From prime to endless prime,
I sit on Being's throne,
A lord o'er space and time.

'Then, crazy World,' said I,
'What is it thou canst give,
Which wanting, I must die,
Or having, I shall live?'

1865–1931

## 42 *Australia*

(Published on the day the Australian Fleet reached Sydney)

What can we give in return
For her beauty and mystery
  Of flowering forest, infinite plain,
  Deep sky and distant mountain-chain,
And her triumphant sea,
Thundering old songs of liberty?

Love—steadfast as her stars,
And passionate as her sun,
  And joyous as the winds, that fling
  The golden petals of her spring
By gully, spur and run,
On dreaming age, and little one:

Courage—when courage fails
In the blind smoke and pain
  Of raging fire and lurid sky,
  And dumb thirst-driven agony—
Till river and creek again
Swirl seaward through the teeming rain.

Faith—wildflower of the soul,
Thrilling the breathless night
  With fragrance, and the desolate ways
  Where silence fears to whisper praise,
With radiant delight
Of wonder—worship in God's sight.

Duty—O great white stars,
And glorious red cross, shine
  On victory, when, rushing forth
  Against the peril of the North,
Australia's battle-line
Flings out trafalgar's deathless sign.

## 43 *Stars*

Wild eyes—and faces ashen grey
  That strain through lofty prison bars
  To see the everlasting stars,
Then turn—to slumber as we may:

Even as we are, so are they,
  And here is peace for all who know
  The stars still follow where we go,
When heaven and earth have passed away.

Obedient to the unknown Power,
  From out the ruin of a world
  A clustered galaxy is hurled
To glimmer through its steadfast hour

The blazing sun of Shakespeare's soul
  Shattered to star-dust, fills again
  With meteor-flights the immortal brain
That seeks a yet more splendid goal.

And still a voice—that now is ours—
  Repeats for aye the unknown word
  That thrilled the heart of beast and bird
Ere man had learned to love the flowers.

## 44 *Faith, Love, and Death*

Grey dawn—and lucent star that slowly paled
Amid the breaking splendour of the years,
When boyhood's heart looked up to Heaven, through tears
Of joy, to see the glory of God unveiled:
High noon—and bridal earth, whose footsteps failed
For very love,—when passionate hopes and fears
Dazzled the flowers, made music in the ears,
And through the trancèd wood their rapture trailed.

Calm eventide—afar the lonely west
Dreams of the wondrous day, and dreaming, lies
With folded hands, still lips, and weary eyes
Searching the shadows of eternal rest:
Childhood—and youth—and age,—for each a prize,
Faith—Love—and Death—I know not which is best.

## 45 *Sea-Grief*

Along the serried coast the Southerly raves,
Grey birds scream landward through the distance hoar,
And, swinging from the dim, confounded shore,
The everlasting boom of broken waves
Like muffled thunder rolls about the graves
Of all the wonder-lands and lives of yore,
Whose bones asunder bleach for evermore,
In sobbing chasms and under choking caves:

O breaking heart—whose only rest is rage,
White tossing arms, and lips that kiss and part
In lonely dreams of love's wild ecstasy,
Not the mean earth thy suffering can assuage
Nor highest heaven fulfil thy hungry heart,
O fair, full-bosomed passionate weeping sea.

## EDWARD DYSON 1865–1931

### 46 *Peter Simson's Farm*

Simson settled in the timber when his arm was strong and true,
And his form was straight and limber; and he wrought the long day through
In a struggle, single-handed, and the trees fell slowly back,
Twenty thousand giants banded 'gainst a solitary jack.

Through the fiercest days of summer you might hear his keen axe ring
And re-echo in the ranges, hear his twanging crosscut sing;
There the great gums swayed and whispered, and the birds were skyward blown,
As the circling hills saluted o'er a bush king overthrown.

Clearing, grubbing, in the gloaming, strong in faith the man descried
Heifers sleek and horses roaming in his paddocks green and wide,
Heard a myriad corn-blades rustle in the breeze's soft caress,
And in every thew and muscle felt a joyous mightiness.

So he felled the stubborn forest, hacked and hewed
with tireless might,
And a conqueror's peace went with him to his fern-
strewn bunk at night:
Forth he strode next morn, delighting in the duty to
be done,
Whistling shrilly to the magpies trilling carols to the
sun.
Back the clustered scrub was driven, and the sun fell
on the lands,
And the mighty stumps were riven 'tween his bare,
brown, corded hands.
One time flooded, sometimes parching, still he did the
work of ten,
And his dog-leg fence went marching up the hills and
down again.

By the stony creek, whose tiny streams slid o'er the
sunken boles
To their secret, silent meetings in the shaded water-
holes,
Soon a garden flourished bravely, gemmed with
flowers, and cool and green,
While about the hut a busy little wife was always seen.

Came a day at length when, gazing down the paddock
from his door,
Simson saw his horses grazing where the bush was
long before,
And he heard the joyous prattle of his children on the
rocks,
And the lowing of the cattle, and the crowing of the
cocks.

There was butter for the market, there was fruit upon the trees,
There were eggs, potatoes, bacon, and a tidy lot of cheese;
Still the struggle was not ended with the timber and the scrub,
For the mortgage is the toughest stump the settler has to grub.

But the boys grew big and bolder—one, a sturdy, brown-faced lad,
With his axe upon his shoulder, loved to go to work 'like dad,'
And another in the saddle took a bush-bred native's pride,
And he boasted he could straddle any nag his dad could ride.

Though the work went on and prospered there was still hard work to do;
There were floods, and droughts, and bush-fires, and a touch of pleuro too;
But they laboured, and the future held no prospect to alarm—
All the settlers said: 'They're stickers up at Peter Simson's farm.'

One fine evening Pete was resting in the hush of coming night,
When his boys came in from nesting with a clamorous delight;
Each displayed a tiny rabbit, and the farmer eyed them o'er,—
Then he stamped—it was his habit—and he smote his knee and swore.

Two years later Simson's paddock showed dust-coloured, almost bare,
And too lean for hope of profit were the cows that pastured there;
And the man looked ten years older. Like the tracks about the place,
Made by half a million rabbits, were the lines on Simson's face.

As he fought the bush when younger, Simson stripped and fought again,
Fought the devastating hunger of the plague with might and main,
Neither moping nor despairing, hoping still that times would mend,
Stubborn-browed and sternly facing all the trouble Fate could send.

One poor chicken to the acre Simson's land will carry now.
Starved, the locusts have departed; rust is thick upon the plough;
It is vain to think of cattle, or to try to raise a crop,
For the farmer has gone under, and the rabbits are on top.

So the strong, true man who wrested from the bush a homestead fair
By the rabbits has been bested; yet he does not know despair—
Though begirt with desolation, though in trouble and in debt,
Though his foes pass numeration, Peter Simson's fighting yet!

He is old too soon and failing, but he's game to start anew,
And he tells his hopeless neighbours 'what the Gov-mint's *goin'* to do.'
Both his girls are in the city, seeking places with the rest,
And his boys are tracking fortune in the melancholy West.

## 47 *The Worked-out Mine*

On summer nights when moonbeams flow
And glisten o'er the high, white tips,
And winds make lamentation low,
As through the ribs of shattered ships,
And steal about the broken brace
Where pendant timbers swing and moan,
And flitting bats give aimless chase,
Who dares to seek the mine alone?

The shrinking bush with sable rims
A skeleton forlorn and bowed,
With pipe-clay white about its limbs
And at its feet a tattered shroud;
And ghostly figures lurk and groan,
Shrill whispers sound from ghostly lips,
And ghostly footsteps start the stone
That clatters sharply down the tips.

The engine-house is dark and still,
The life that raged within has fled;
Like open graves the boilers chill
That once with glowing fires were red;

Above the shaft in measured space
A rotted rope swings to and fro,
Whilst o'er the plat and on the brace
The silent shadows come and go.

And there below, in chambers dread
Where darkness like a fungus clings,
Are lingering still the old mine's dead—
Bend o'er and hear their whisperings!
Up from the blackness sobs and sighs
Are flung with moans and muttered fears,
A low lament that never dies,
And ceaseless sound of falling tears.

My ears intent have heard *their* grief—
The fitful tones of Carter's tongue,
The strong man crushed beneath the reef,
The groans of Panton, Praer, and Young,
And 'Trucker Bill' of Number Five,
Along the ruined workings roll;
For deep in every shoot and drive
This mine secretes a shackled soul.

Ah! woful mine, where wives have wept,
And mothers prayed in anxious pain,
And long, distracting vigil kept,
You yawn for victims now in vain!
Still to that god, whose shrine you were,
Is homage done in wild device;
Men hate you as the sepulchre
That stores their bloody sacrifice.

## 48 *Babylon*

Babylon has fallen! Aye; but Babylon endures
Wherever human wisdom shines or human folly lures;
Where lovers lingering walk beside, and happy children play,
Is Babylon! Babylon! for ever and for aye.
The plan is rudely fashioned, the dream is unfulfilled,
Yet all is in the archetype if but a builder willed;
And Babylon is calling us, the microcosm of men,
To range her walls in harmony and lift her spires again;
The sternest walls, the proudest spires, that ever sun shone on,
Halting a space his burning race to gaze on Babylon.

Babylon has fallen! Aye; but Babylon shall stand:
The mantle of her majesty is over sea and land.
Hers is the name of challenge flung, a watchword in the fight
To grapple grim eternities and gain the old delight;
And in the word the dream is hid, and in the dream the deed,
And in the deed the mastery for those who dare to lead.
Surely her day shall come again, surely her breed be born
To urge the hope of humankind and scale the peaks of morn—

To fight as they who fought till death their bloody field upon,
And kept the gate against the Fate frowning on Babylon.

Babylon has fallen! Nay; for Babylon falls never;
Her seat is in the aspiring brain, in nerves that leap
and quiver:
Upon her towers of ancient dream Prometheus is
throned,
And still his ravished spark is flung wherever man-
hood's owned.
All vices, crimes, and mutinies were Babylon's: and
then
All honours, prides, and ecstasies—for in her streets
were Men;
And Man by Man must grow apace, and Man by Man
must thrive,
And Man from Man must snatch the torch that lights
the race alive:
Yea, here and now her citizens, as in the years far
gone,
Stone by stone, and joy with moan, upbuild Babylon.

## FRANK S. WILLIAMSON

1865–1936

### 49 *Dew*

Dew upon the robin as he lilts there on the thorn,
Jewel on a scarlet breast a fleeting moment worn,
And suddenly by fairy hands into blue heaven drawn.

Slave that dares to seek a couch in Cleopatra's bower,
Curtained by the crimson leaves of yonder royal
flower,
Until the spearmen of the sun shall end the blissful
hour.

Dew upon the blackwood boughs by morning Zephyr
stirred,
Shaken to the fronded fern by restless diamond
bird;
Night's opals on a spendthrift morn, with gracious
stealth conferred.

Cast upon the Autumn leaves wind-sundered from
their home,
Crimson, amber, scarlet, grey, amethystine, chrome,
A mother's tears o'er children fair that perish in the
loam.

Dew that lies by mountain stream the oreoicas know,
Flung from fragile blue-bell cups, when vernal
breezes blow,
And carillons and odours wed and fill the vale below.

Gems that crust a million mounds where pauper
children lie,
Where the wind goes murmuring a ceaseless hush-
a-bye,
Yet all the while the children sing like skylarks in the
sky.

Dew that fills the starry eyes at closing of the day,
Gleaming by a carmine cloud that slowly fades
away,
Immortal sadness of a god to mortal love a prey.

Dew that falls from Her sad eyes, to cool with healing
rain,
The hearts that are so lonely here, that lonely must
remain,
Till all the Seraphim are stirred, to dream of earth
again.

## 50 *She comes as comes the Summer Night*

She comes as comes the summer night,
  Violet, perfumed, clad with stars,
To heal the eyes hurt by the light
  Flung by Day's brandish'd scimitars.
The parted crimson of her lips
  Like sunset clouds that slowly die
When twilight with cool finger-tips
  Unbraids her tresses in the sky.

The melody of waterfalls
  Is in the music of her tongue,
Low chanted in dim forest halls
  Ere Dawn's loud bugle-call has rung.

And as a bird with hovering wings
  Halts o'er her young one in the nest,
Then droops to still his flutterings,
  She takes me to her fragrant breast.

O star and bird at once thou art,
  And Night, with purple-petall'd charm,
Shining and singing to my heart,
  And soothing with a dewy calm.
Let Death assume this lovely guise,
  So darkly beautiful and sweet,
And, gazing with those starry eyes,
  Lead far away my weary feet.

And that strange sense of valleys fair
  With birds and rivers making song
To lull the blossoms gleaming there,
  Be with me as I pass along.

Ah! lovely sisters, Night and Death,
And lovelier Woman—wondrous three,
'Givers of Life,' my spirit saith,
Unfolders of the mystery.

Ah! only Love could teach me this,
In memoried springtime long since flown;
Red lips that trembled to my kiss,
That sighed farewell, and left me lone.
O Joy and Sorrow intertwined,—
A kiss, a sigh, and blinding tears,—
Yet ever after in the wind,
The bird-like music of the spheres!

## MARY GILMORE

1865–

51

### *Sweethearts*

It 's gettin' bits o' posies,
'N' feelin' mighty good;
A-thrillin' 'cause she loves you,
An' wond'rin' why she should;

An' stoppin' sort o' sudden,
Because you're full o' thought;
An' quick with res'less feelin's
That make life seem too short!

It 's feelin' 's if she'd loved you
Before the world was made;
As if she still would love you,
When all our debts are paid;

As if there 's nothin' mattered,
  As if the world was good,
As if the Lord was lookin',
  An' sort o' understood.

It 's feelin' kind an' gentle
  To everything that 's weak,
And doin' jus' sich actions
  As nearly seem to speak;

Sich actions women reckon
  Are certain to occur
When he 's in love with some one,
  And that some one is—her.

52

## *Marri'd*

It 's singin' in an' out,
  An' feelin' full of grace;
Here 'n' there, up an' down,
  An' round about th' place.

It 's rollin' up your sleeves,
  An' whit'nin' up the hearth,
An' scrubbin' out th' floors,
  An' sweepin' down th' path;

It 's bakin' tarts an' pies,
  An' shinin' up th' knives;
An' feelin' 's if some days
  Was worth a thousand lives.

It 's watchin' out th' door,
An' watchin' by th' gate;
An' watchin' down th' road,
An' wonderin' why he 's late;

An' feelin' anxious-like,
For fear there 's something wrong;
An' wonderin' why he 's kep',
An' why he takes so long.

It 's comin' back inside
An sittin' down a spell,
To sort o' make believe
You're thinkin' things is well.

It 's gettin' up again
An' wand'rin' in an' out;
An' feelin' wistful-like,
Not knowin' what about;

An' flushin' all at once,
An' smilin' just so sweet,
An' feelin' real proud
The place is fresh an' neat.

An' feelin' awful glad
Like them that watch'd Silo'm;
An' everything because
A man is comin' Home!

## 53 *The Willow by the Fountain*

The willow by the fountain
Is just a willow tree;
But I have seen it billow
As if it were the sea.

And sometimes in the spring
It seemed a woman's hair,
Tost and wanton-minded,
As it played on the air.

Wintered I have seen it
(And oh it was human!)
Crying on the wind
Like an old grey woman.

## 54 *The Passionate Heart*

O LIFE, I called to thee:
What answer mad'st thou me?
—Only a mocking word
Across the darkness heard.

I held mine hands to thee:
What gavest thou to me?
—Only a broken thing;
A harp without a string.

Mine heart I showed to thee:
What show'dst thou unto me?
—All that there might hove been
If the eyes had but seen.

All that was I, I gave:
O life! what gavest me?
—Only the pain
That cries in vain:
O Passionate Heart!
Only the smart.

55

## *Remembering*

DONAL, my father,
Over the years
Still wakes my sorrow,
Still fall my tears.

Man, like the red deer
On the high mountains,
Thine was a heart
Deeper than fountains.

High was thy look,
Son of the heather.
Light was thy foot,
Lofty thy feather!

Man like a chieftain,
To the dusk falling,
Over the seas
I heard thy last calling.

As thou to me,
Now the shades gather,
So I call thee,
Donal, my father.

56

## *Christmas Carol*

ONE shall come walking,
Walking into town,
Dust upon His sandals,
Dust upon His gown.

Who is this comes walking,
  Walking into town,
Dust upon His sandals,
  Dust upon His gown?

He is the King of Glory,
  He is the Father's Son;
Christ of Whom the story
  Never shall be done.

Sing then all ye nations
  Sing of the Child was born
Unto Mary, the Virgin,
  That first Christmas morn.

Tell out how the shepherds
  Heard in the winter sky,
Songs that the holy angels
  Sang from heaven on high.

Tell out how in splendour
  Shone the burning star,
Naught in heaven might hinder,
  Naught on earth might mar.

## 57 *Contest I Ask*

Bite deep, O life, bite deep!
  I do not fear thy teeth!
But, as the waves that leap
  Against the rocks in seeth,
  Smite with thy hardened palm
  My soul, lest it becalm.

I do not fear thee, life!
  Nor shall my spirit shrink
Though thou shouldst engine strife
  Where hope in peace should drink;
  Better to wounded lie
  Than undeclared to die.

And I, O life, I would
  Be stirred to the heart's core
As a man is stirred, my good
  The blows I met and bore.
  So with thee I would strive,
  That I may stand alive.

Pride must have range; the weak
  May ask their gentle meads,
Wherein they dwell all meek
  And soft as sappy weeds;
  But ever I must cry,
  "Give tempest, lest I die!"

58

## *Nationality*

I HAVE grown past hate and bitterness,
  I see the world as one;
Yet, though I can no longer hate,
  My son is still my son.

All men at God's round table sit,
  And all men must be fed;
But this loaf in my hand,
  This loaf is my son's bread.

59

## *Where the Dead Men lie*

1866–1892

Out on the wastes of the Never Never—
That 's where the dead men lie!
There where the heat-waves dance for ever—
That 's where the dead men lie!
That 's where the Earth's loved sons are keeping
Endless tryst: not the west wind sweeping
Feverish pinions can wake their sleeping—
Out where the dead men lie!

Where Brown Summer and Death have mated—
That 's where the dead men lie!
Loving with fiery lust unsated—
That 's where the dead men lie!
Out where the grinning skulls bleach whitely
Under the saltbush sparkling brightly;
Out where the wild dogs chorus nightly—
That 's where the dead men lie!

Deep in the yellow, flowing river—
That 's where the dead men lie!
Under the bank, where the shadows quiver—
That 's where the dead men lie!
Where the platypus twists and doubles,
Leaving a train of tiny bubbles;
Rid at last of their earthly troubles—
That 's where the dead men lie!

East and backward pale faces turning—
That 's how the dead men lie!
Gaunt arms stretched with a voiceless yearning—
That 's how the dead men lie!

Oft in the fragrant hush of nooning
Hearing again their mother's crooning,
Wrapt for aye in a dreamful swooning—
That 's how the dead men lie!

Only the hand of Night can free them—
That 's when the dead men fly!
Only the frightened cattle see them—
See the dead men go by!
Cloven hoofs beating out one measure,
Bidding the stockman know no leisure—
That 's when the dead men take their pleasure!
That 's when the dead men fly!

Ask, too, the never-sleeping drover:
He sees the dead pass by;
Hearing them call to their friends—the plover,
Hearing the dead men cry;
Seeing their faces stealing, stealing,
Hearing their laughter pealing, pealing,
Watching their grey forms wheeling, wheeling
Round where the cattle lie!

## BERNARD O'DOWD

1866–

60 *Australia*

Last sea-thing dredged by sailor Time from Space,
Are you a drift Sargasso, where the West
In halcyon calm rebuilds her fatal nest?
Or Delos of a coming Sun-God's race?
Are you for Light, and trimmed, with oil in place,
Or but a Will o' Wisp on marshy quest?
A new demesne for Mammon to infest?
Or lurks millennial Eden 'neath your face?

The cenotaphs of species dead elsewhere
That in your limits leap and swim and fly,
Or trail uncanny harp-strings from your trees,
Mix omens with the auguries that dare
To plant the Cross upon your forehead sky,
A virgin helpmate Ocean at your knees.

## 61 *Proletaria*

THE sunny rounds of Earth contain
An obverse to its Day,
Our fertile Vagrancy's domain,
Wan Proletaria.

From pole to pole of Poverty
We stumble through the years,
With hazy-lanterned Memory
And Hope that never nears.

Wherever Plenty's crop invites
Our pitiful brigades,
Lurk cannoneers of Vested Rights,
Juristic ambuscades;

And here hangs Rent, that squalid cage
Within which Mammon thrusts,
Bound with the fetter of a wage,
The helots of his lusts.

With palsied Doubt as guide, we wind
Among the lanes of Need,
Where meagre Hungers scouting find
But slavered baits of Greed.

The wet-lipped Lamias of Caste,
  Awaiting our advance,
Our choicest squadrons' fealty blast
  With magic smile and glance:

Delilah-limbed temptations flit
  Among our drowsy rows,
And on our willing captains fit
  The badges of our foes.

What wonder sometimes if in stealth
  Our starker outposts wait,
And, in the prowling eyes of Wealth,
  Dash vitriol of Hate;

Or if our Samsons, ere too late,
  Their treasons should make good
By whelming in the temple's fate
  Their viper owners' brood!

Our polyandrous dam has borne
  To Satan and to God
The hordes of Night, the clans of Morn,
  That through our valleys plod.

Ah, motherhood of misery
  For Christ-child as for pest!
The greater her fertility
  The drier grows her breast!

Too many linger on the track;
  A few outstrip the time:
Some, God has tattooed yellow, black,
  And some disguised with crime.

Art's living archives here abound,
  Carraras of Despair,
And those weird masks of Sight and Sound
  The Tragic Muses wear.

Tho' blind and dull, 'tis we supply
  The Painter's dazzling dreams;
The rolling flood of Poetry
  From our dumb chaos streams.

Nay, when your world is over-tired,
  And Genius comatose,
Our race, by Nemesis inspired,
  Old Order overthrows:

With earthquake-life we thrill your land,
  Refill the cruse of Art,
Revitalize spent Wisdom, and—
  Resume our weary part.

The palace of successful Guilt
  Is mortared with our shame;
On hecatombs of Us are built
  The soaring towers of Fame.

We are the gnomes of Titan works
  Whose throbbings never cease;
Our unregarded signet lurks
  On every masterpiece.

The floating isles, that shuttling tie
  All peoples into one
By adept steersmen's sorcery
  Of magnet, steam, and sun;

Religion's dolmens, Sphinxes, spires,
Her Biblic armouries;
The helot lightning of the wires
That mesh your lands and seas;

The viaducts 'tween Near and Far,
Whereon, o'er range and mead,
Bacchantic Trade's triumphant car
And iron tigers speed;

The modern steely crops that rise
Where technic Jasons sow:
—All these but feebly symbolize
The largesse we bestow.

And our reward? In this wan land,
In clientage of Greed,
Despised, polluted, maimed and banned,
To wander and—to breed.

## 62 *Young Democracy*

Hark! Young Democracy from sleep
Our careless sentries raps:
A backwash from the Future's deep
Our Evil's foreland laps.

Unknown, these Titans of our Night
Their New Creation make:
Unseen, they toil and love and fight
That glamoured Man may wake.

Knights-errant of the human race,
The Quixotes of to-day,
For man as man they claim a place,
Prepare the tedious way.

They seek no dim-eyed mob's applause,
Deem base the titled name,
And spurn, for glory of their Cause,
The tawdry nymphs of Fame.

No masks of ignorance or sin
Hide from them you or me:
We're Man—no colour shames our skin,
No race or caste have we.

The prognathous Neanderthal,
To them, conceals the Bruce;
They see Dan Aesop in the thrall;
From swagmen Christ deduce.

Tho' butt for lecher's ribaldry
And scarred by woman's scorn,
In baby-burdened girl they see
God-motherhood forlorn.

With them, to racial siredom glides
The savage we deprave;
That eunuch brilliant Narses hides:
A Spartacus, that slave.

They Jesus find in manger waif;
In horse-boys Shakespearehood:
And earthquake-Luthers nestling safe
In German miner's brood.

The God that pulses everywhere
They know fills Satan's veins;
No felon but they see Him there
Behind His mirror's stains.

'Tis theirs Earth's charnel rooms to clear,
And ruthless sweep away
The Lares and Penates dear
To man in his decay.

Their restless energy supplies
Munitions that will wreck
The keeps whence feudal enemies
Our free banditti check.

Their unrelenting wars they wage,
These Furies of the Right,
Where myriad Falsehood's legions rage,
Artilleried by Might;

Where Fashion's stupid iron clamps
Young Innovation's head,
And Law the stalwart Present cramps
In Past's Procrustes-bed;

Where Pride of learning, substance, blood,
Or prowess in the strife,
Exacts from teeming lowlihood
The lion's share of life;

Where Gluttony would to the brutes
Degrade his loose-lipped gangs;
Where Tyranny his venom shoots
From one or million fangs;

Where Cruelty, in Wisdom's mask,
  Piths fame from writhing beasts;
Where blest is racial Murder's task
  By Christ's apostate priests.

In Punic or in Persian fray
  With Love's and Conscience' foes,
Unadvertising Romans they,
  And Spartans free from pose.

Abused as mad or traitors by
  The trolls they would eject;
Cold-shouldered by wan Apathy;
  Of motives mean suspect;

Outcast from social gaieties;
  Denied life's lilied grace;
They mount their hidden Calvaries
  To save the human race.

The bowers of Art a few may know;
  A few wait highly placed:
Most bear the hods of common woe,
  And some you call disgraced.

But whether in the mob or school,
  In church or poverty,
They teach and live the Golden Rule
  Of Young Democracy:—

*'That culture, joy and goodliness*
  *Be th' equal right of all:*
*That Greed no more shall those oppress*
  *Who by the wayside fall:*

*'That each shall share what all men sow:*
*That colour, caste 's a lie:*
*That man is God, however low—*
*Is man, however high.'*

63

## *Love and Sacrifice*

CAN we not consecrate
To man and God above
This volume of our great
Supernal tide of love?

'Twere wrong its wealth to waste
On merely me and you,
In selfish touch and taste,
As other lovers do.

This love is not as theirs:
It came from the Divine,
Whose glory still it wears,
And print of Whose design.

The world is full of woe,
The time is blurred with dust,
Illusions breed and grow,
And eyes' and flesh's lust.

The mighty league with Wrong
And stint the weakling's bread;
The very lords of song
With Luxury have wed.

Fair Art deserts the mass,
And loiters with the gay;
And only gods of brass
Are popular to-day.

Two souls with love inspired,
  Such lightning love as ours,
Could spread, if we desired,
  Dismay among such powers:

Could social stables purge
  Of filth where festers strife:
Through modern baseness surge
  A holier tide of life.

Yea, two so steeped in love
  From such a source, could draw
The angels from above
  To lead all to their Law.

We have no right to seek
  Repose in rosy bower,
When Hunger thins the cheek
  Of childhood every hour:

Nor while the tiger, Sin,
  'Mid youths and maidens roams,
Should Duty skulk within
  These selfish cosy homes.

Our place is in the van
  With those crusaders, who
Maintain the rights of man
  'Gainst despot and his crew.

If sacrifice may move
  Their load of pain from men,
The greatest right of Love
  Is to renounce It then.

Ah, Love, the earth is woe's
And sadly helpers needs:
And, till its burden goes,
Our work is—where it bleeds.

## 64 *The Cow*

This is a rune I ravelled in the still,
Arrogant stare of an Australian cow—
'These prankt intruders of the hornless brow,
Puffed up with strange illusions of their skill
To fence, to milk, to fatten and to kill,
Once worshipped me with temple, rite and vow,
Crowned me with stars, and bade rapt millions bow
Before what abject guess they called my will!
'To-day, this flunkey of my midden, Man,
Throws child-oblations in my milking byre,
Stifles in slums to spare me lordly fields,
Flatters with spotless consorts my desire,
And for a pail of cream his birth-right yields,
As once in Egypt, Hellas, Ind, Iran!'

## 65 *The Poet*

They tell you the poet is useless and empty the sound of his lyre,
That science has made him a phantom, and thinned to a shadow his fire:
Yet reformer has never demolished a dungeon or den of the foe
But the flame of the soul of a poet pulsated in every blow.

They tell you he hinders with tinklings, with gags from an obsolete stage,
The dramas of deed and the worship of Laws in a practical age:
But the deeds of to-day are the children of magical dreams he has sung,
And the Laws are ineffable Fires that from niggardly heaven he wrung!

The bosoms of women he sang of are heaving to-day in our maids:
The God that he drew from the Silence our woes or our weariness aids:
Not a maxim has needled through Time, but a poet had feathered its shaft,
Not a law is a boon to the people but he has dictated its draft.

And why do we fight for our fellows? For Liberty why do we long?
Because with the core of our nerve-cells are woven the lightnings of song!
For the poet for ages illumined the animal dreams of our sires,
And his Thought-Become-Flesh is the matrix of all our unselfish desires!

Yea, why are we fain for the Beautiful? Why should we die for the Right?
Because through the forested æons, in spite of the priests of the Night,

Undeterred by the faggot or cross, uncorrupted by
glory or gold,
To our mothers the poet his Vision of Goodness and
Beauty has told.

When, comrades, we thrill to the message of speaker in
highway or hall,
The voice of the poet is reaching the silenter poet in
all:
And again, as of old, when the flames are to leap up
the turrets of Wrong,
Shall the torch of the New Revolution be lit from the
words of a Song!

## 66 *Last Stanzas of 'The Bush'*

Where is Australia, singer, do you know?
These sordid farms and joyless factories,
Mephitic mines and lanes of pallid woe?
Those ugly towns and cities such as these
With incense sick to all unworthy power,
And all old sin in full malignant flower?
No! to her bourn her children still are faring:
She is a temple that we are to build:
For her the ages have been long preparing:
She is a prophecy to be fulfilled!

All that we love in olden lands and lore
Was signal of her coming long ago!
Bacon foresaw her, Campanella, More,
And Plato's eyes were with her star aglow!

Who toiled for Truth, whate'er their countries were,
Who fought for Liberty, they yearned for her!
No corsair's gathering ground, nor tryst for schemers,
  No chapman Carthage to a huckster Tyre,
She is the Eldorado of old dreamers,
  The Sleeping Beauty of the world's desire.

She is the scroll on which we are to write
  Mythologies our own and epics new:
She is the port of our propitious flight
  From Ur idolatrous and Pharaoh's crew.
She is our own, unstained, if worthy we,
By dream, or god, or star we would not see:
Her crystal beams all but the eagle dazzle.
  Her wind-wide ways none but the strong-winged sail:
She is Eutopia, she is Hy-Brasil,
  The watchers on the tower of morning hail!

Yet she shall be as we, the Potter, mould:
  Altar or tomb, as we aspire, despair:
What wine we bring shall she, the chalice, hold:
  What word we write shall she, the script, declare:
Bandage our eyes, she shall be Memphis, Spain:
Barter our souls, she shall be Tyre again:
And if we pour on her the red oblation,
  O'er all the world shall Asshur's buzzards throng:
Love-lit, her Chaos shall become Creation:
  And dewed with dream, her silence flower in song.

## 67 *The Sliprails and the Spur*

The colours of the setting sun
  Withdrew across the Western land—
He raised the sliprails, one by one,
  And shot them home with trembling hand;
Her brown hands clung—her face grew pale—
  Ah! quivering chin and eyes that brim!—
One quick, fierce kiss across the rail,
  And, 'Good-bye, Mary!' 'Good-bye, Jim!'

*Oh, he rides hard to race the pain*
  *Who rides from love, who rides from home:*
*But he rides slowly home again,*
  *Whose heart has learnt to love and roam.*

A hand upon the horse's mane,
  And one foot in the stirrup set,
And, stooping back to kiss again,
  With 'Good-bye, Mary! don't you fret!
When I come back'—he laughed for her—
  'We do not know how soon 'twill be;
I'll whistle as I round the spur—
  You let the sliprails down for me.'

She gasped for sudden loss of hope,
  As, with a backward wave to her,
He cantered down the grassy slope
  And swiftly round the darkening spur.
Black-pencilled panels standing high,
  And darkness fading into stars,
And, blurring fast against the sky,
  A faint white form beside the bars.

And often at the set of sun,
  In winter bleak and summer brown,
She'd steal across the litle run,
  And shyly let the sliprails down,
And listen there when darkness shut
  The nearer spur in silence deep,
And when they called her from the hut
  Steal home and cry herself to sleep.

*And he rides hard to dull the pain*
  *Who rides from one who loves him best . . .*
*And he rides slowly back again,*
  *Whose restless heart must rove for rest.*

## 68 *The Great Grey Plain*

Out West, where the stars are brightest,
  Where the scorching north wind blows,
The bones of the dead gleam whitest
  And the sun on a desert glows—
Yet within the selfish kingdom
  Where man starves man for gain,
Where white men tramp for existence—
  Wide lies the Great Grey Plain.

No break in its awful horizon,
  No blur in the dazzling haze,
Save where by the bordering timber
  The fierce, white heat-waves blaze,
And out where the tank-heap rises
  Or looms when the long days wane,
Till it seems like a distant mountain
  Low down on the Great Grey Plain.

From the camp, while the rich man's dreaming,
Come the 'traveller' and his mate,
In the ghastly daybreak seeming
Like a swagman's ghost out late;
And the horseman blurs in the distance,
While still the stars remain,
A low, faint dust-cloud haunting
His track on the Great Grey Plain.

And all day long from before them
The mirage smokes away—
The daylight ghost of an ocean
Creeps close behind all day
With an evil, snake-like motion,
Like the waves of a madman's brain:
'Tis a phantom *not* like water
Out there on the Great Grey Plain.

There 's a run on the Western limit
Where a man lives like a beast;
And a shanty in the mulga
That stretches to the East;
And the hopeless men who carry
Their swags and tramp in pain—
The footman must not tarry
Out there on the Great Grey Plain.

Out West, where the stars are brightest,
Where the scorching north wind blows,
And the bones of the dead seem whitest,
And the sun on a desert glows—
Out Back in the hungry distance
That brave hearts dare in vain—
Where swagmen tramp for existence—
There lies the Great Grey Plain.

69

## *The Teams*

A CLOUD of dust on the long, white road,
And the teams go creeping on
Inch by inch with the weary load;
And by the power of the green-hide goad
The distant goal is won.

With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,
And necks to the yokes bent low,
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must;
And the shining tires might almost rust
While the spokes are turning slow.

With face half-hid by a broad-brimmed hat,
That shades from the heat's white waves,
And shouldered whip, with its green-hide plait,
The driver plods with a gait like that
Of his weary, patient slaves.

He wipes his brow, for the day is hot,
And spits to the left with spite;
He shouts at Bally, and flicks at Scot,
And raises dust from the back of Spot,
And spits to the dusty right.

He'll sometimes pause as a thing of form
In front of a settler's door,
And ask for a drink, and remark 'It 's warm,'
Or say 'There 's signs of a thunderstorm;'
But he seldom utters more.

The rains are heavy on roads like these
And, fronting his lonely home,
For days together the settler sees
The waggons bogged to the axletrees,
Or ploughing the sodden loam.

And then, when the roads are at their worst,
The bushman's children hear
The cruel blows of the whips reversed
While bullocks pull as their hearts would burst,
And bellow with pain and fear.

And thus—with glimpses of home and rest—
Are the long, long journeys done;
And thus—'tis a thankless life at the best!—
Is Distance fought in the mighty West,
And the lonely battle won.

## LOUIS LAVATER

1867–

### 70 *Ocean*

Unstable monster, formless, vast, alone,
How awful in thy giant impotence!
Canst thou not—now—uprear that bulk immense
And make a captured continent thy throne?
Why surging round this planet's narrow zone
Pursue a star with tireless vehemence,
Yet falter at the feeblest shore's defence
And crawl into thyself and moan and moan?

We happier mortals when our flood-tide 's o'er
Shall ebb into the dust and there no more
Be vext with earthly harassment; whilst thou,
Unquiet Ocean, thou shalt neither rest
Nor shalt accomplish thine eternal quest,
But moan and moan—as thou art moaning now!

## LOUIS LAVATER

### 71 *Courage*

Two kinds of courage are there in the creed
Of simple men. The one is courage born,
Not made; enfibred in the heart, not worn
Above it; strong in every hour of need.
The other courage is of doubtful breed,
For cowardice itself caught on the thorn
Of sharp despair may lead a hope forlorn
And trick the world with one swift dazzling deed.
But this that holds me in perpetual lease,
How can I give so motley thing a name?
That wins no battles nor will sue for peace,
That dares, that cries 'Alas, my strength is gone!'
That droops, revives, that falters and fights on—
Is this thing courage or but fear of shame?

## MARY E. FULLERTON 1868–1946

### 72 *The Skull*

O BOWL that held the hot imprisoned fire,
Cup where the sacred essence used to burn—
That fluent essence that shall ne'er return—
Old home of Aspiration and Desire:
What art thou now to honour and admire?
A thing inconsequential one might spurn,
Thou art not e'en the scattered ashes' urn;—
Husk of the spirit that shall not expire.

Thou cage and shell of ancient busy Thought,
Nurse-house of Soul, the domicile of him
Long fled thy osseous walls that Nature wrought
To please proud Time's caprice and passing whim;
'Twixt two eternities a moment caught,
He rose from thee to join the seraphim.

## 73 *Song*

Love, love me only,
  Love me for ever;
My life 's been lonely,
  A joyless endeavour.
Though earth were heaven,
  I in it for ever,
Of thee bereaven—
  I'd love again never.

## 74 *Winged Words*

The wingèd words, they pass
  Still everywhere,
Seeds of the spirit-grass
  The dream-winds bear
From that heart-field to this,
Where thought as feeling is;
There 's not a seed will miss
  Life, once sown there.

They pass, the faery words,
  In shade and shine,
As they were magic birds
  This heart of mine
Gave shape and colour to,
As in the light and dew
The primal creatures grew
  From germs divine.

1869–

## 75 *The Great Grey Water*

Now two have met, now two have met,
  Who may not meet again—
Two grains of sand, two blades of grass,
  Two threads within the skein—
Beside the Great Grey Water.

Two hands to touch, two hearts to touch;
  And, here forgathered, we
Will not forget, may not forget,
  Where last forgathered three—
Beyond the Great Grey Water.

Two glasses filled, two pipes to fill—
  'To all our fortunes, brother!'
And as they clink—like so—we drink
  Fair passage to the other
Across the Great Grey Water.

For three have sailed, and one has sailed,
  His sins, like ours, still on him,
God sleep his soul! five oceans roll
  Their long weight all upon him.
O God! thy Great Grey Water!

But I am still, and you are still,
  And here our chance has flung us;
True comrades we, but . . . there were three
  And one is not among us
Beside the Great Grey Water.

A breathing space, a biding place,
  Soft lights and beakers beaded,
Then out again and on again,
  Unminded and unheeded,
Across the Great Grey Water.

Now two have met where three have met
  With curses or with laughter;
And so our Day shall pass away,
  And so our Night come after—
But, ah! the Great Grey Water!

## 76. *Lost and Given Over*

A MERMAID 's not a human thing,
  An' courtin' sich is folly;
Of flesh an' blood I'd rather sing,
  What ain't so melancholy.
Oh, Berta! Loo! Juanita! Sue
Here 's good luck to me and you—
    Sing rally! ri-a-rally!
The seas is deep; the seas is wide;
But this I'll prove whate'er betide,
    I'm bully in the alley!
    I'm bull-ee in our al-lee!

The Hooghli gal 'er face is brown;
  The Hilo gal is lazy;
The gal that lives by 'Obart town
  She'd drive a dead man crazy;
Come, wet your lip, and let it slip!

The Gretna Green 's a tidy ship—
Sing rally!
The seas is deep; the seas is blue;
But 'ere 's good 'ealth to me and you,
Ho, rally!

The Lord may drop us off our pins
To feed 'is bloomin' fishes;
But Lord forgive us for our sins—
Our sins is most delicious!
Come, drink it up and fill yer cup!
The world it owes us bite and sup,
And Mimi, Ju-Ju, Sally;
The seas is long; the winds is strong;
The best of men they will go wrong—
Hi, rally! ri-a-rally!

The Bowery gal she knows 'er know;
The Frisco gal is silly;
The Hayti gal ain't white as snow—
They're whiter down in Chili.
Now what 's the use to shun the booze?
They'll flop your bones among the ooze
Sou--west-by-Sou' the galley.
The seas is green; the seas is cold;
The best of men they must grow old—
Sing rally! ri-a-rally!

All round the world where'er I roam,
This lesson I am learnin':
If you've got sense you'll stop at home
And save the bit yer earnin'.

So hang the odds! It 's little odds,
When every 'eathen 'as 'is gods,
And neither two will tally:
When black and white drink, wimmin, fight—
In these three things they're all alright—
Sing rally! ri-a-rally!

When double bunks, Fo-castle end,
Is all the kind that 's carried,
Our manners they will likely mend—
Most likely we'll be married.
But till sich time as that be done,
We'll take our fun as we've begun—
Sing rally!
The flesh is weak; the world is wide;
The dead man 'e goes overside—
Sing rally! rally!

We're given and lost to the girls that wait
From Trinity to Whitsund'y,
From Sunda Strait to the Golden Gate
An' back to the Bay o' Fundy;
Oh, it 's Mabel, Loo, an' it 's Nancy-Poo,
An' 'ere 's good luck, an' I love you—
Sing rally!
Oh, it's cents an' dollars an' somebody hollers—
The sun comes up an' the mornin' follers—
Sing rally!

We're given an' lost to octoroon,
The Portugee cruiser painty,
The Chinkie gal with 'er eyes 'arf-moon,
An' the Japanee darlin' dainty.
Oh, it 's Tokio-town when the sun goes down,
It 's 'arf-a-pint and it 's 'arf-a-crown—
Sing rally!
'Er spars may lift an' 'er keel can shift,
When a man is done 'e 's got to drift—
Sing rally! Ho, rally!

The Hooghli gal 'er face is brown,
The Hilo gal 's a daisy,
The gal that lives by 'Obart town
She'd drive a dead man crazy.
So, pretty an' plain, it 's Sarah Jane
'Uggin' an' kissin' an' 'Come again!'
Sing rally! ri-a-rally!
The seas is deep; the seas is wide;
But this I'll prove what else betide,
I'm bully in the alley,
Ho! Bullee in the Al-lee.

1869–

## 77 *Drought*

My road is fenced with the bleached, white bones
And strewn with the blind, white sand,
Beside me a suffering, dumb world moans
On the breast of a lonely land.

On the rim of the world the lightnings play,
The heat-waves quiver and dance,
And the breath of the wind is a sword to slay
And the sunbeams each a lance.

I have withered the grass where my hot hoofs tread,
I have whitened the sapless trees,
I have driven the faint-heart rains ahead
To hide in their soft green seas.

I have bound the plains with an iron band,
I have stricken the slow streams dumb!
To the charge of my vanguards who shall stand?
Who stay when my cohorts come?

The dust-storms follow and wrap me round;
The hot winds ride as a guard;
Before me the fret of the swamps is bound
And the way of the wild-fowl barred.

I drop the whips on the loose-flanked steers;
I burn their necks with the bow;
And the green-hide rips and the iron sears
Where the staggering, lean beasts go.

I lure the swagman out of the road
To the gleam of a phantom lake;
I have laid him down, I have taken his load,
And he sleeps till the dead men wake.

My hurrying hoofs in the night go by,
And the great flocks bleat their fear
And follow the curve of the creeks burnt dry
And the plains scorched brown and sere.

The worn men start from their sleepless rest
With faces haggard and drawn;
They cursed the red Sun into the west
And they curse him out of the dawn.

They have carried their outposts far, far out,
But—blade of my sword for a sign!—
I am the Master, the dread King Drought,
And the great West Land is mine!

## 78 *From the Gulf*

Store cattle from Nelanjie! The mob goes feeding past,
With half-a-mile of sandhill 'twixt the leaders and the last;
The nags that move behind them are the good old Queensland stamp—
Short backs and perfect shoulders that are priceless on a camp;
And these are *men* that ride them, broad-chested, tanned, and tall,
The bravest hearts amongst us and the lightest hands of all:

Oh, let them wade in Wonga grass and taste the
Wonga dew,
And let them spread, those thousand head—for we've
been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! By half-a-hundred towns,
By Northern ranges rough and red, by rolling open
downs,
By stock-routes brown and burnt and bare, by flood-
wrapped river-bends,
They've hunted them from gate to gate—the drover
has no friends!
But idly they may ride to-day beneath the scorching
sun
And let the hungry bullocks try the grass on Wonga
run;
No overseer will dog them here to 'see the cattle
through,'
But they may spread their thousand head—for we've
been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! They've a naked track to
steer;
The stockyards at Wodonga are a long way down
from here;
The creeks won't run till God knows when, and half
the holes are dry;
The tanks are few and far between and water 's dear
to buy:

There 's plenty at the Brolga bore for all his stock and
mine—
We'll pass him with a brave God-speed across the
Border Line;

And if he goes a five-mile stage and loiters slowly through,
We'll only think the more of him—for we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! They're mute as milkers now;
But yonder grizzled drover, with the care-lines on his brow,
Could tell of merry musters on the big Nelanjie plains,
With blood upon the chestnut's flanks and foam upon the reins;
Could tell of nights upon the road when those same mild-eyed steers
Went ringing round the river bend and through the scrub like spears;
And if his words are rude and rough, we know his words are true,
We know what wild Nelanjies are—and we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! Around the fire at night
They've watched the pine-tree shadows lift before the dancing light;
They've lain awake to listen when the weird bush-voices speak,
And heard the lilting bells go by along the empty creek;
They've spun the yarns of hut and camp, the tales of play and work,
The wondrous tales that gild the road from Normanton to Bourke;

They've told of fortunes foul and fair, of women false and true,
And well we know the songs they've sung—for we've been droving too!

Store cattle from Nelanjie! Their breath is on the breeze;
You hear them tread, a thousand head, in blue-grass to the knees;
The lead is on the netting-fence, the wings are spreading wide,
The lame and laggard scarcely move—so slow the drovers ride!
But let them stay and feed to-day for sake of Auld Lang Syne;
They'll never get a chance like this below the Border Line;
And if they tread our frontage down, what 's that to me or you?
*What 's ours to fare, by God, they'll share! for we've been droving too!*

## RODERIC QUINN

1869–

### 79 *The Camp within the West*

O DID you see a troop go by
Way-weary and oppressed,
Dead kisses on the drooping lip
And a dead heart in the breast?

*Yea, I have seen them one by one*
*Way-weary and oppressed;*
*And when I asked them, 'Whither speed?'*
*They answered, 'To the West!'*

And were they pale as pale could be,
Death-pale, with haunted eyes?
And did you see the hot white dust
Range round their feet and rise?

*O, they were pale as pale could be,*
*And pale as an embered leaf;*
*The hot white dust had risen, but*
*They laid it with their grief.*

Did no one say 'The way is long,'
And crave a little rest?
*O no; they said 'The night is nigh,*
*Our camp is in the West!'*

And did pain pierce their feet, as though
The way with thorns were set,
And were they visited by strange
Dark angels of regret?

*O, yea; and some were mute as death,*
*Though, shot by many a dart,*
*With them the salt of inward tears*
*Went stinging through the heart.*

And how are these wayfarers called,
And whither do they wend?
*The Weary-Hearted—and their road*
*At sunset hath an end.*

Shed tears for them . . . *Nay, nay, no tears!*
*They yearn for endless rest;*
*Perhaps large stars will burn above*
*Their camp within the West.*

## 80 *The Circling Hearths*

My Countrymen, though we are young as yet
With little history, naught to show
Of lives enleagued against a foreign foe,
Torn flags and triumph, glory or regret;
Still some things make our kinship sweet,
Some deeds inglorious but of royal worth,
As when with tireless arms and toiling feet
We felled the tree and tilled the earth.

'Tis no great way that we have travelled since
Our feet first shook the storied dust
Of England from them, when with love and trust
In one another, and large confidence
In God above, our ways were ta'en
'Neath alien skies—each keeping step in mind
And soul and purpose to one trumpet strain,
One urging music on the wind:

Yet tears of ours have wet the dust, have wooed
Some subtle green things from the ground—
Like violets—only violets never wound
Such tendrils round the heart: the solitude
Has seen young hearts with love entwine;
And many gentle friends gone down to death
Have mingled with the dust, and made divine
The very soil we tread beneath.

Thus we have learned to love our country, learned
To treasure every inch from foam
To foam; to title her with name of Home;
To light in her regard a flame that burned
No land in vain, that calls the eyes
Of men to glory heights and old renown;
That wild winds cannot quench, nor thunder-skies
Make dim, nor many waters drown.

Six hearths are circled round our shores, and round
The six hearths group a common race,
Though leagues divide, the one light on their face;
The same old songs and stories rise; the sound
Of kindred voices and the dear
Old English tongue make music; and men move
From hearth to hearth with little fear
Of aught save open arms and love.

To keep these hearth-fires red, to keep the door
Of each house wide—that is our part:
Surely 'tis noble! Surely heart to heart,
God's love upon us and one goal before,
Is something worth; something to win
Our hearts to effort; something it were good
To garner soon; and something 'twould be sin
To cast aside in wanton mood.

My Countrymen, hats off! with heart and will
Thank God that you are free, and then
Arise and don your nationhood like men,
And manlike face the world for good or ill.
Peace be to you, and in the tide
Of years great plenty till Time's course be run:
Six Ploughmen in the same field side by side,
But, if need be, six Swords as one.

## 81 *Mid-Forest Fear*

She is standing at the gate,
  Tall and sweet,
And although the hour be late
  She will greet
    Me, her lover,
    Smiling over
Absent mind and tardy feet.

'Rest,' I'll say to her, 'and more rest,'
  As she wraps her love around me,
And I'll tell her of the forest,
Of the strange, fear-haunted forest
  Where the fleshless beings found me.

For I trod a rock-strewn rude way
  Thinking only of my lover,
When the moonlight on the woodway
Made a weird-way of the woodway,
  And a place where demons hover.

For the leaves that had been sleeping
  On the sodden soil-bed lying,
Took a motion and 'gan creeping,
Like a thousand small feet creeping,
  And there rose a distant sighing.

Why the trees did droop their tresses,
  Weeping leaves for something under,
And what bode in dim recesses,
Feline-lurked in dim recesses,
  Paled my cheeks and heart to ponder.

Had I feet I would have hurried,
  But the moonlit forest chained me,
Soul and body grasped and worried,
With frost-fingers gripped and worried,
  Till, half-stayed, my hurt heart pained me. . . .

'Rest,' I'll say, 'my Love, and more rest;
  Things unseen have life and motion
And they haunt the moonlit forest--
Soul-affronting haunt the forest,
  And men meet them on the ocean.'

She will look so grave and kind,
  Saying 'Rest—
Rest is here for heart and mind
  On this breast—
    Put aside all
    Fancies idle,
I will shield you—Love is best.'

## 82 *The Men Who Try*

O, I remember days of joy
  And nights of rolling fun,
When all the world was gay and gold,
  And we were twenty-one.

Our feet were set on shining slopes
  That led to golden heights,
The future shone before our eyes
  Alight with starry lights.

We vowed to mould the world anew—
All crooked things make straight;
To sow the seed with tireless hands,
And toil, and till, and wait.

And now and then, by night and day.
We turned to pluck a rose—
A blue-eyed girl, a glass of wine,
An hour of sweet repose.

Alas, alack, those years are sped,
Those hero days are gone;
We do not dream the dreams we dreamt
When we were twenty-one.

We tried, and tried with might and main,
To reach the shining crest,
But failed, yet earned the fame of those—
The men who do their best.

For he who does his best does well—
He gives the world his all—
A lifting force, a shaping thought,
A clarion forward-call.

It may be, while he mourns his fate—
His soul's ungrasped desire—
That from his dim and dying spark
Another lights his fire.

There is a crown for those who fail,
Who sit cast down and grieve;
For more than triumph often seems
The effort to achieve.

The old, gold hopes have shed their gleam,
The goal remains unwon;
Thank God, though we be grey and pale,
The world is twenty-one.

## CHRISTOPHER J. BRENNAN

1870–1932

### 83 *The Pangs that guard the Gates of Joy*

THE pangs that guard the gates of joy,
the naked sword that will be kist,
how distant seem'd they to the boy,
white flashes in the rosy mist!

Ah, not where tender play was screen'd
in the light heart of leafy mirth
of that obdurate might we ween'd
that shakes the sure repose of earth.

And sudden, 'twixt a sun and sun,
the veil of dreaming is withdrawn:
lo, our disrupt dominion
and mountains solemn in the dawn;

hard paths that chase the dayspring's white,
and glooms that hold the nether heat:
oh, strange the world upheaved from night,
oh, dread the life before our feet!

## 84 *My Heart was wandering in the Sands*

My heart was wandering in the sands,
a restless thing, a scorn apart;
Love set his fire in my hands,
I clasp'd the flame unto my heart.

Surely, I said, my heart shall turn
one fierce delight of pointed flame;
and in that holocaust shall burn
its old unrest and scorn and shame;

surely my heart the heavens at last
shall storm with fiery orisons,
and know, enthroned in the vast,
the fervid peace of molten suns.

The flame that feeds upon my heart
fades or flares, by wild winds controll'd;
my heart still walks a thing apart,
my heart is restless as of old.

## 85 *O White Wind, numbing the World*

O white wind, numbing the world
to a mask of suffering hate!
and thy goblin pipes have skirl'd
all night, at my broken gate.

O heart, be hidden and kept
in a half-light colour'd and warm,
and call on thy dreams that have slept
to charm thee from hate and harm.

They are gone, for I might not keep;
my sense is beaten and dinn'd;
there is no peace but a grey sleep
in the pause of the wind.

## 86 *I said, This Misery must end*

I SAID, This misery must end:
Shall I, that am a man and know
that sky and wind are yet my friend,
sit huddled under any blow?
so speaking left the dismal room
and stept into the mother-night
all fill'd with sacred quickening gloom
where the few stars burn'd low and bright,
and, darkling on my darkling hill
heard thro' the beaches' sullen boom
heroic note of living will
rung trumpet-clear against the fight;
so stood and heard, and rais'd my eyes
erect, that they might drink of space,
and took the night upon my face,
till time and trouble fell away
and all my soul sprang up to feel
as one among the stars that reel
in rhyme on their rejoicing way,
breaking the elder dark, nor stay
but speed beyond each trammelling gyre,
till time and sorrow fall away
and night be wither'd up, and fire
consume the sickness of desire.

1870–1940

## 87 *France*

Oh, golden-lilied Queen—immortal France!
Thou heritress of storied name and deed,
As thou hast pluck'd, so oft, from cumb'ring weed
The fragrant flow'rs of Freedom and Romance,
So shalt thou seize to-day the fateful chance
That comes to thee in this thy hour of need,
When once again thy sacred frontiers bleed
Beneath the thrust of the Invader's lance.

For, with the hour, hath also come again
The pure and splendid spirit of the Maid
To nerve thy sons and wipe away thy tears,
Till, sanctified by Sorrow, purged by pain,
Thou shalt arise, unfettered, unafraid,
And walk in honour down the deathless years.

## 88 *Russia*

Implacable as are thy arctic floes;
Grim and gigantic as thy mountain height;
Girt with thy pines for spindles and the light
Of pale auroras for thy stars; to those
Who know thee not thou seem'st as one who goes
Unvex'd by Wrong, nor swerves to help the Right,
A grey Lachesis of the Northern night,
Stark as thy steppes and colder than thy snows.

But we—we know thee now, Ally and Friend!
True as thy Baltic Spars and tried by fire,
Thy seeming coldness hides a courage high,
A stern resolve to do, endure and die,
So that the holy cause of thy desire—
Thy cause and ours—shall triumph in the end.

89

## *All men are free!*

'ALL men are free and equal born
Before the Law!' So runs the worn
And spacious, lying, parrot-cry.
All men *are* free—to starve or sigh;
But few to feed on Egypt's corn.

There toils the sweated slave, forlorn;
There weeps the babe with hunger torn;
Dear God! Forgive us for the lie—
'All men are free!'

That man may laugh while this must mourn;
One 's heir to honour, one to scorn—
Were they born free? Were you? Was I?
No! Not when born, but when they die
And of their robes—or rags—are shorn,
All men are free!

90

## *Mater Dolorosa*

JUST as of yore the friendly rain
Patters its old and frank refrain;
Just as of yore the world swings by
The little window where I lie
Watching the shadows wax and wane.

I see, beyond the Aegean main,
His cross upon the grave-scarred plain—
Yet still the dawn-flush climbs the sky,
Just as of yore!

His cross—and mine! They try in vain
With careful phrase to stanch the pain;
They say, 'A hero's death!' But I
Long only for his footstep nigh;
Long only for my boy again,
Just as of yore!

## JOHN LE GAY BRERETON

1872–1942

### 91 *The Robe of Grass*

Here lies the woven garb he wore
Of grass he gathered by the shore
Whereon the phantom waves still fret and foam
And sigh along the visionary sand.
'Where is he now?' you cry; 'What desolate land
Gleams round him in dull mockery of home?'

You knew him by the robe he cast
About him, grey and worn at last.
'It fades,' you murmur, 'changes, lives and dies.
Why has he vanished? Whither is he fled?
And is there any light among the dead?
Can any dream come singing where he lies?'

Ah peace! lift up your clouded eyes,
Nor where this curious relic lies
Grope in the blown dust for the print of feet.
Dim, twittering, ghastly sounds are these; but he
Laughs now as ever, still aloof and free,
Eager and wild and passionate and fleet.

Because he has dropped the part he played,
Shall love be baffled and dismayed?
Let the frail earth and all its visions melt,
And let the heart that loves, the eye that sees,
Seek him amid immortal mysteries,
For lo, he dwells where he has ever dwelt.

92

## *Buffalo Creek*

A TIMID child with heart oppressed
  By images of sin,
I slunk into the bush for rest,
  And found my fairy kin.

The fire I carried kept me warm:
  The friendly air was chill.
The laggards of the lowing storm
  Trailed gloom along the hill.

I watched the crawling monsters melt
  And saw their shadows wane
As on my satin skin I felt
  The fingers of the rain.

The sunlight was a golden beer,
  I drank a magic draught;
The sky was clear and, void of fear,
  I stood erect and laughed.

And sudden laughter, idly free,
  About me trilled and rang,
And love was shed from every tree,
  And little bushes sang.

The bay of conscience' bloody hound
That tears the world apart
Has never drowned the silent sound
Within my happy heart.

## 93 *Waking*

Above us hangs the jewelled night;
And how her restful cool caresses
Make us forget the weary sight
Of summer's daily wildernesses!

O aching toil and hope deferred,
The night has made a promise to me;
She whispered, and a wonder stirred,
And still the joy is thrilling through me.

Smooth water, shadow deeply still,
I dare not move, you wait unsleeping
—You share the breathless hopes that fill
The watch my longing soul is keeping.

A fish is leaping in the bay;
The shafts of yellow light are shaking.
O glorious night and happy day,
Beneath my silent heart she's waking.

## 94 *The Dead*

Hail and farewell to those who fought and died,
Not laughingly adventurous, nor pale
With idiot hatred, nor to fill the tale
Of racial selfishness and patriot pride,

But merely that their own souls rose and cried
Alarum when they heard the sudden wail
Of stricken freedom and along the gale
Saw her eternal banner quivering wide.

Farewell, high-hearted friends, for God is dead
If such as you can die and fare not well
—If when you fall your gallant spirit fail.
You are with us still, and can we be adread
Though hell gape, bloody-fanged and horrible?
Glory and hope of us who love you, Hail!

## SHAW NEILSON

1872-1942

95

### *Love's Coming*

Quietly as rosebuds
Talk to thin air,
Love came so lightly
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as lovers
Creep at the middle noon,
Softly as players tremble
In the tears of a tune;

Quietly as lilies
Their faint vows declare,
Came the shy pilgrim:
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as tears fall
On a warm sin,
Softly as griefs call
In a violin;

Without hail or tempest,
  Blue sword or flame,
Love came so lightly
  I knew not that he came.

## 96 *The Meeting of Sighs*

Your voice was the rugged
  old voice that I knew;
I gave the best grip of
  my greeting to you.
I knew not of your lips—
  you knew not of mine;
Of travel and travail
  we gave not a sign.

We drank and we chorused
  with quips in our eyes;
But under our song was
  the meeting of sighs.
I knew not of your lips—
  you knew not of mine;
For lean years and lone years
  had watered the wine.

## 97 *O Heart of Spring!*

O HEART of Spring!
Spirit of light and love and joyous day,
So soon to faint beneath the fiery Summer:
Still smiles the Earth, eager for thee alway:
Welcome art thou, soever short thy stay,
Thou bold, thou blithe newcomer!
Whither, O whither this thy journeying,
O heart of Spring?

O heart of Spring!
After the stormy days of Winter's reign,
When the keen winds their last lament are sighing,
The Sun shall raise thee up to life again:
In thy dim death thou shalt not suffer pain:
Surely thou dost not fear this quiet dying?
Whither, O whither this thy journeying,
O heart of Spring?

O heart of Spring!
Youth's emblem, ancient and unchanging light,
Uncomprehended, unconsumed, still burning:
Oh that we could, as thou, rise from the night
To find a world of blossoms lilac-white,
And long-winged swallows unafraid returning . . .
Whither, O whither this thy journeying,
O heart of Spring?

## 98 *The Land where I was born*

Have you ever been down to my countree
where the trees are green and tall?
The days are long and the heavens are high,
but the people there are small.
There is no work there: it is always play:
the sun is sweet in the morn;
But a thousand dark things walk at night
in the land where I was born.

Have you ever been down to my countree
where the birds made happy Spring?
The parrots screamed from the honey-trees
and the jays hopped chattering.
Strange were the ways of the water-birds
In the brown swamps, night and morn:
I knew the roads they had in the reeds
in the land where I was born.

Have you ever been down to my countree?
have you ever ridden the horses there?
They had silver manes, and we made them prance
and plunge and gallop and rear.
We were knights of the olden time
when the old chain-mail was worn:
The swords would flash! and the helmets crash!
in the land where I was born.

Have you ever been down to my countree?
It was full of smiling queens:
They had flaxen hair, they were white and fair,
but they never reached their teens.

Their shoes were small and their dreams were tall:
wonderful frocks were worn;
But the queens all strayed from the place we played
in the land where I was born.

. . . I know you have been to my countree
though I never saw you there;
I know you have loved all things I loved,
flowery, sweet and fair.
The days were long—it was always play;
but we,—we are tired and worn:
They could not welcome us back again
to the land where I was born.

99

## *The Green Singer*

All singers have shadows
That follow like fears,
But I know a singer
Who never saw tears;
A gay love—a green love—
Delightsome—divine:
The Spring is that singer—
An old love of mine!

All players have shadows,
And into the play
Old sorrows will saunter—
Old sorrows will stay.
But here is a player
Whose speech is divine:
The Spring is that player—
An old love of mine!

All singers grow heavy:
  Their hours as they run
Bite up all the blossoms,
  Suck up all the sun;
But I know a singer
  Delightsome—divine:
The gay love—the green love—
  An old love of mine!

## 100 *The Break of Day*

The stars are pale.
Old is the Night, his case is grievous,
  His strength doth fail.

Through stilly hours
The dews have draped with love's old lavishness
  The drowsy flowers.

And Night shall die.
Already, lo! the Morn's first ecstasies
  Across the sky.

An evil time is done.
Again, as some one lost in a quaint parable,
  Comes up the Sun.

ETHEL TURNER

## 101 *A Boat on the Sea*

A BOAT on the sea, my boat,
  Eager and frail!
Sweet skies, smile as you look
  On that fairy sail.

Waves, great waves, many years
  You have worked your will.
Just while she passes through,
  Kind waves, be still.

Winds—and I may not ask
  That you never blow,
But spare her the moaning note
  That the old boats know.

LOUISE MACK

## 102 *Before Exile*

HERE is my last good-bye,
  This side the sea.
Good-bye! good-bye! good-bye!
  Love me, remember me.

This is my last good-bye,
  This side the sea.
I bless, I pledge, I cling,
  Love me, remember me.

This is my last good-bye
To each dear tree,
To every silent plain,
Love me, remember me.

This is my last good-bye,
This side the sea.
O friends! O enemies!
Love me, remember me.

You will remain, but I
Must cross the sea.
My heart is faint with love,
O Land! remember me.

You will not even ask
What claim has she.
She loved us, she has gone . . .
'Tis all, remember me.

This is what you will say,
My Land across the sea,
She was of us, has gone . . .
And you'll remember me.

Here is my last good-bye
This side the sea.
Farewell! and when you can,
Love me, remember me.

103

## *To Sydney*

City, I never told you yet—
O little City, let me tell—
A secret woven of your wiles,
Dear City with the angel face,
And you will hear with frowning grace,
Or will you break in summer smiles?

This is a secret, little town,
Lying so lightly towards the sea;
City, my secret has no art,
Dear City with the golden door;
But oh, the whispers I would pour
Into your ears—into your heart!

You are my lover, little place,
Lying so sweetly all alone.
And yet I cannot, cannot tell
My secret, for the voice will break
That tries to tell of all the ache
Of this poor heart beneath your spell.

Dreaming, I tell you all my tale;
Tell how the tides that wash your feet
Sink through my heart and cut its cords.
Dreaming, I hold my arms, and drag
All, all into my heart—the flag
On the low hill turned harbourwards,

And all the curving little bays,
The hot, dust-ridden, narrow streets,
The languid turquoise of the sky,
The gardens flowing to the wave,
I drag them in. O City, save
The grave for me where I must lie.

Yet humbly I would try to build
  Stone upon stone for this town's sake;
Humbly would try for you to aid
  Those whose wise love for you will rear
  White monuments far off and near,
White, but unsoiled, undesecrate.

## M. FORREST

### 104 *The Lonely Woman*

WHERE the ironbarks are hanging leaves disconsolate and pale,
Where the wild vines o'er the ranges their spilt cream of blossom trail,
By the door of the bark humpey, by the rotting blood-wood gates,
On the river-bound selection, there a lonely woman waits,

Waits and watches gilded sunrise glow behind the mountain peak,
Hears the water-hens' shrill piping, in the rushes by the creek,
And by the sullen stormy sunsets, when the anxious cattle call,
Sees the everlasting gum-trees closing round her like a wall.
With the hunger of her bosom notes the wild birds seek their mates,
All alone and heavy-hearted, there the lonely woman waits.

Where the tall brown city buildings loom against a
cloud-flecked sky,
Where along the curving tramlines brightly varnished
cars rush by,
Where the call of petty traders echoes down the dusty
street,
And forever comes the beating of the many passing
feet,
Where the bamboo reeds are whispering by the green
park's iron gates,
By the muslin-curtained window, there a lonely
woman waits.

Where the white caps lash the sea-wall, and the great
waves thunder by,
Where the grey rains sweep the beaches underneath
a sodden sky,
Where the swift-winged gull flies landward, and the
fisher bides at home,
When the long Pacific reaches are a seething stretch
of foam,
Where the empty boat drifts seawards, by the ocean's
sand-flanked gates,
In the weather-boarded cottage, there a lonely woman
waits.

Where the river boats are calling, where the railway
engine shrieks,
Or where only wild bird liltings echo from the reedy
creeks,
Where the grey waves grieve to landward, and a wet
wind beats the seas,

Or where pearl-white moths flit slowly through the dropping wattle-trees,
By the high verandah pillars, by the rotting blood-wood gates,
Crowded town or dreary seaboard, everywhere some woman waits!

## HUGH McCRAE

1876–

### 105 *Never Again*

She looked on me with sadder eyes than Death,
And, moving through the large, autumnal trees,
Failed like a phantom on the bitter breath
Of midnight; and the unillumined seas
Roared in the darkness out of centuries.

Never on earth, or in the holy sky,
Beyond the limits of the secret ring
God walls about His Kingdom jealously,
Has ever been a fairer, sweeter thing
Than she: more fair than all imagining.

Never again! though I should waste the hours
To search the galleries of angels thro',
Or, in the exhalation of the flowers,
Gaze for her spirit, tremulous as dew,
To reascend the unfathomable blue.

I seek her in the labyrinthine maze
Of stars unravelling their golden chain,
And, from my cavern, mark the lightning blaze
A pathway for her down the singing rain.
In vain, in vain: she cannot come again.

106 *A Bridal Song*

She is more sparkling beautiful
  Than dawn-light seen thro' tears
The weeping worlds of Paradise
  Shed down upon the spheres.

Her eyes are bright and passionate
  With love's immortal flame—
The flowers of a wildwood tree
  In petals write her name.

Her breath of life 's so wondrous sweet
  The bees halt, in amaze,
Their streaming honey-laden fleet
  Above the meadow ways;

And every little singing thing
  Atween the breasted hill
And God's high-vaulted cloistering
  Upraises with a will

Paeans of laud, and cheery chaunts
  Of her, who now is mine—
Queen-Angel of angelic haunts
  Thro' months of mead and wine.

107 *Australian Spring*

The bleak-faced Winter, with his braggart winds
  (Coiled to his scrawny throat in tattered black),
Posts down the highway of his late domain,
  His spurs like leeches in his bleeding hack.

He rides to reach the huge embattled hills
  Where all the brooding summer he may lie
Engulfed in Kosciusko's silent snow,
  His shadow waving o'er the lofty sky.

And jolly Spring, with love and laughter gay
  Full fountaining, lets loose her tide of bees
Upon the waking ember-flame of bloom
  New kindled in the honey-scented trees.

The old, old man forsakes the chimney-hole,
  Where erst he warmed his bones and lazy blood,
And, clasping Molly to his wheezing breast,
  Triumphant floats, cock-whoop, upon the flood.

## FREDERICK WILLIAM OPHEL

### *Pioneers*

They said: 'Now here is gold;
The cloth of gold unrolled
  Lies spread about our feet,
  Now fortune smiles and sweet.'
The mulga hid the face of Fate
Watching with ruthless eyes of hate.

'Now wealth is ours,' they said,
'Great wealth and riches red.
  Our journeying is done,
  Guerdon and gold are won.'
Red were the written words they signed;
And, scenting blood, the wild dog whined.

They said: 'Now ours is fame,
An honoured glorious name—
  The name of pioneers,
  And honour as of seers.'
They turned to take the homeward track,
And dreamed a joyous welcome back.

No man knows where they lie;
None heard their last death-cry;
  Unmarked their grave by mound;
  But at the last trump sound
Perchance some God who all things hears
Will give them praise as pioneers.

## 109 *His Epitaph*

He lies here. See the bush
  All grey through grief for him;
Hoar scrub—like ashes cast—
  Sprinkles the valley grim.

The salt-bush is his shroud,
  Wide skies his only pall,
And *in memoriam*
  A thousand stamp-heads fall.

Gold-lured to death—and yet
  He would have had it so.
Say mass, sing requiem
  With the grey bush—and go.

Quietly he has found,
  Here in the Golden West,
The long-sought-for at last,
  An El Dorado blest.

## 110 *Grey*

I

Lady of Sorrow! What though laughing blue,
Thy sister, mock men's anguish, and the sun
Glare like an angry judge on many a one
That longs for night his bitter shame to rue?
Yet dost thou grant thy mercy of mist and dew,
Thy cloudy grace, ere day's revenge be done,
Weaving over the morn's red malison
Thy veil of peace, with pity trembling through.

When all light loves and all brave hues are flown,
When beaten hope falls from the reeling fight,
And life is lone upon her desolate way,
And noon is fierce, and no men see aright,
Then weary eyes turn unto thee, their own,
Lady of Grief, the soul's madonna, Grey.

II

Yet not in sorrow only art thou fair,
For joy may know and love thee in the pall
Of spray that slumbers on the waterfall,
Or in low cottage-smoke in evening air,
Or in brave stone carven in glory rare,
Or when the tender mists of autumn fall
Dappling the mead with beauty, and the tall
Stark dreaming oaks thine ancient livery wear.

Yet none hath known thy loveliness aright
  Save him who gazing in his lady's eyes
Sees dim lists tossing with plumes of many a knight
    And woods where elfin waters gleam and glance
    And all the vision and faith of old romance
  And the great dream of youth that never dies.

## *111* *Roses and Rain*

The warm rain sighs and throbs upon my roses,
  And through the casement steals the magic scent
  Like some fair captive long in durance pent
That 'neath the touch of love her heart uncloses:
The bride of heaven, quiet earth, reposes
  Swooning beneath his kisses with content,
  While the strong shower that is love's sacrament
Quickens her dreaming lawns and garden-closes.

And in the roses and the rain art thou:
  For might I hold thee here this eve of June,
    So mighty a rain of love my heart would shower
  Upon thy dearth, that thy dear being would swoon
Within my arms, and to my soul, I vow,
    Yield all its fragrance, like a rain-wash'd flower.

## *112* *Sonnets of the Empire*

### *Gloriana's England*

Forth sped thy gallant sailors, blithe and free,
  Fearing nor foeman's hate, nor iron clime,
  Nor Lima's flame, nor Plata's fever-slime,
So they might give thee far Cathay in fee;
Yet swept thy poet o'er a vaster sea,
  'Neath fairer gales to Indies more sublime,
  Questing along the golden shores of Rhyme
For all the treasure of eternity.

One will, one end, one pulse of deep desire,
Drove Hudson through the ice to joy and death,
Sped Drake to glory through the long South roll:
And kindled Marlowe's eager heart with fire,
Set Spenser voyaging 'neath the spirit's breath,
And won the world for Shakespeare's captain soul.

*Hawke*

Great sea-dog, fighter in the great old way!
What though thy ships were tinder, and the pest
Rotted thy ruffian crews that need had prest,
And all thy keels were clogged with foul decay,
Yet through the roaring months thy squadron lay
A watch-dog eager at the throat of Brest
While all the ocean smote her from the West
And all the tempests tore her in their play.

Thy soul was of the whirlwind, and thy cry
Still leaps from out the crash of guns and waves
To hurl us headlong on the foeman's van,
As in the Bay of Death, 'mid breakers high
And felon reefs whereo'er the Atlantic raves,
Thy flagship foremost into glory ran.

*Nelson*

White soul of England's glory, sovereign star!
Ne'er shall disaster beat her down, nor shame,
While still she sees thee by the leaping flame
That kindled o'er Aboukir, near and far,
Or feels thee quivering through the onset's jar
That filled the North with fear of England's name,
Or trembles with the joy of all the fame
That died and cast out death at Trafalgar.

Thy name was lightning, and like lightning ay
  Thine onset shivered, far and swift and fell:
    Ever thy watchword holds us, and whene'er
The fierce Dawn breaks, and far along the sky
  Roars the last battle, yet with us 'tis well—
    We keep the touch, thy hand and soul are there.

### *Dawn at Liverpool*

The sunlight laughs along the serried stone
  About whose feet the wastrel tide runs free;
  Light lie the shipmasts, fairy-like to see,
Athwart the royal city's splendour thrown:
On runs the noble river, wide and lone,
  Like some great soul that presses to the sea
  Where life is rendered to eternity
And eager thought hath rest in the Unknown.

So sets thy tide, my country, to the deep
  Whose face is black with thunder near and far,
    And vexed with fleering gusts and tyrannous rain.
Shall the cloud lift and give thee rest and sleep,
  Or wilt thou 'mid the surge and crash of war
    Shatter thy life against the invading main?

### *Oxford*

Thou gav'st us learning, lit with many an hour
  Of mirth and wine, when tongues were brisk and gay,
  Till on us stole the ancient proctor, Day;
Thou gav'st us joy in many a quiet bower
Where Cherwell slumbers 'neath the may aflower;
  Thou gav'st us beauty, when the night was fey
  With wonder, and the wizard moonlight lay
Soft on the ivy of the ensorcelled tower.

And now from sea to sea and pole to pole
We work Her hest for whom thou hast in fee
The lives of all thy children: and in all
We do of worth there shines some gleam of thee;
Throughout their blackest night our eyes recall
The morning grace that lit thy lovely soul.

*Australia, 1905*

Careless she lies along the Southern Main,
The lovely maiden, wanton with the spell
Of sun and vastness and the ocean swell:
Northward the great gnomes watch her beauty, fain
To snatch her wealth of gold and fleece and grain,
And bend her being to their purpose fell:
But she lies lazy, and the passing bell
Of older glory stirs her sense in vain.

Nor shall she wake and know her danger near
Till some high heart and true, her fated lord,
Shall kiss her lips, and all her will control,
And fill her wayward heart with holy fear,
And cross her forehead with his iron sword,
And bring her strength, and armour, and a soul.

*Australia, 1914*

The night is thick with storm and driving cloud,
Lurid at instants through the blackness break
Quick gleams of war across the perilous lake
From yonder isles that awe and magic shroud:
Far in the northland smite Thor's hammers loud
On steel that warlocks for her spoilure make,
Till lo! from sleep Australia starts awake
And lifts the queenly head that sloth had bowed.

Not yet her eyes are clear: throughout her brain
Still swarm the antic creatures of her dream,
The idiot mirth, the sports that kill the soul,
Yet shall not night lay hold on her again,
For through the rack she spies the morning gleam
Clear on the sword that lights her to her goal.

### *Australia to England*

By all the deeds to Thy dear glory done,
By all the lifeblood spilt to serve Thy need,
By all the fettered lives Thy touch hath freed,
By all Thy dream in us anew begun:
By all the guerdon English sire to son
Hath given of highest vision, kingliest deed,
By all Thine agony, of God decreed
For trial and strength, our fate with Thine is one.

Still dwells Thy spirit in our hearts and lips,
Honour and life we hold from none but Thee,
And if we live Thy pensioners no more
But seek a nation's might of men and ships,
'Tis but that when the world is black with war
Thy sons may stand beside Thee strong and free.

1876–

## 113 *The Super-Lark*

A POET heard a skylark sing,
But ere it ceased its preluding
His own harmonious soul was stirred,
And Shelley's song outsoared the bird.
The lark sank twittering to the ground,
The astral strain yet circles round.
Alas, to few the power is given
To poise a theme 'twixt earth and heaven!

## 114 *City of God*

THE Prophet's vision leaves me cold:
I seek no city paved with gold
And decked with gems: my soul awaits
No jasper walls and pearly gates,
For I am out of love with towns,
And long for hills and breezy downs,
Where I may wander far and wide
Over the open countryside.
Whatever Calm and Peace have brought
Into my life was never sought
In city streets—but when I trod
The quiet, country roads of God.

## 115 *The Skylark's Nest*

Here Nature holds as in a hollowed hand,
For keen and loving eyes alone to see,
The larks and lyrics that are yet to be:
But ere this spartan nesting-place was planned,
A frugal builder with discretion scanned
'Neath sheltering cave and arborous scrub and tree
The mason's lore, the weaver's artistry,
Then scooped this simple hollow in the sand.

What truths foregather in this modest nest
That innocence shall yet reveal to Man,
Teaching that Beauty unadorned is blest,
And Art's true bulwark is the puritan;
For in those realms, that unto God belong,
From simplest nest may soar the sweetest song.

## DOROTHY FRANCES McCRAE

1878–1937

## 116 *The Treasure*

My Baby, wouldst thou treasure hoard?
See all the shining Cape-flower gold
Spread on the grass; thou art the lord
Of all thy dainty hands can hold.

Wouldst don a girdle, wear a crown,
A splendid chain to deck thy breast?
Thy feet are set in gold; look down,
What wealth is thine from east to west!

God scatters gold upon the grass,
But men (so dull of heart and eye)
Oft tread it underfoot and pass,
May we prove wiser, you and I!

117

## *September*

You kissed me in June;
To-day, in September,
There ripples the rune;
*'Remember! Remember!'*

We part in September—
How ripples the rune?
*'Remember! Remember*
*You kissed me in June!'*

118

## *Homesick*

I'm sick of fog and yellow gloom,
Of faces strange, and alien eyes,
Your London is a vault, a tomb,
To those born 'neath Australian skies.
*O land of gold and burning blue,*
*I'm crying like a child for you!*

The trees are tossing in the park
Against the banked-up amethyst,
At four o'clock it will be dark,
And I a blind man in the mist.
Hark to old London's smothered roar,
Gruff jailer growling at my door!

Each day I see Fate's wheel whirl round,
And yet my fortunes are the same,
My hopes are trodden in the ground,
Good luck has never heard my name,
O friends, O home, beyond the seas,
Alone in darkness here I freeze!

## DOROTHY FRANCES McCRAE

The day is dead: night falls apace;
I reach my hand to draw the blind,
To hide old London's frowning face,
And then (alas) I call to mind
The shining ways we used to roam
Those long, light evenings at home.

I hate this fog and yellow gloom,
These days of grey and amethyst;
I want to see the roses bloom,
The smiling fields by sunshine kissed—
*O land of gold and burning blue!*
*I'm crying like a child for you!*

## LOUIS ESSON

1879–1943

### 119 *Brogan's Lane*

THERE 's a crack in the city—down that sharp street
In couples, and armed, tramp rozzers on beat.
Like a joss, silhouetted across the pane,
A Chinese face watches down Brogan's Lane,
Brogan's Lane, Brogan's Lane,
A reeling moon blinks over Brogan's Lane.

Flash Fred, when he dives on a red lot, sneaks thro'
To Moscow the swag with a Polaky Jew.
Tho' rooked by old Shylock, he needn't complain,
The melting pot bubbles in Brogan's Lane,
Brogan's Lane, Brogan's Lane,
Rats pinch from their cobbers down Brogan's Lane.

And Jenny, fresh down from the country, goes gay
And drives to the races and laughs at the play;
Till one morn, lying out in the cold and the rain,
A body is perished in Brogan's Lane,
Brogan's Lane, Brogan's Lane,
There 's only one turn to the long last lane.

With opium dens, sly cribs, bones and rags,
'Tis the haunt of thieves, wastrels, poor women and vags.
They booze to bring joy, they sin to numb pain,
But there'll come a stretch at the end of the lane,
Brogan's Lane, Brogan's Lane,
The river and morgue shadow Brogan's Lane.

## 120 *Cradle Song*

Baby, O baby, fain you are for bed,
Magpie to mopoke busy as the bee;
The little red calf 's in the snug cow-shed,
An' the little brown bird 's in the tree.

Daddy 's gone a-shearin', down the Castlereagh,
So we're all alone now, only you an' me.
*All among the wool-O, keep your wide blades full-O!*
Daddy thinks o' baby, wherever he may be.

Baby, my baby, rest your drowsy head,
The one man that works here, tired you must be,
The little red calf 's in the snug cow-shed,
An' the little brown bird 's in the tree.

121 *The old black Billy an' Me*

THE sheep are yarded, an' I sit
Beside the fire an' poke at it.
Far from the booze, an' clash o' men,
Glad, I'm glad I'm back again
On the station, wi' me traps
An' fencin' wire, an' tanks an' taps.
Back to salt-bush plains, an' flocks,
An' old bark hut be th' apple-box.
I turn the slipjack, make the tea,
All 's as still as still can be—
An' the old black billy winks at me.

122 *The Shearer's Wife*

BEFORE the glare o' dawn I rise
To milk the sleepy cows, an' shake
The droving dust from tired eyes,
Look round the rabbit traps, then bake
The children's bread.
There 's hay to stook, an' beans to hoe,
An' ferns to cut i' th' scrub below;
Women must work, when men must go
Shearing from shed to shed.
I patch an' darn, now evening comes,
An' tired I am with labour sore,
Tired o' the bush, the cows, the gums,
Tired, but must dree for long months more
What no tongue tells.
The moon is lonely in the sky,
Lonely the bush, an' lonely I
Stare down the track no horse draws nigh
An' start . . . at the cattle bells.

## 123 *Hamilton*

Wild and wet, and windy wet falls the night on Hamilton,
Hamilton that seaward looks unto the setting sun,
Lady of the patient face, lifted everlastingly,
Veiled and hushed and mystical as a cloistered nun.

O the days, the cruel days creeping over Hamilton
Like a train of haggard ghosts, homeless and accursed,
Moaning for a fleet o' dream silver-sailed and wonderful,
Moaning for a sorrow's sake, the fairest and the first.

O the moon, the lonely moon, leaning low on Hamilton,
Thro' the years that sunder us the dead come back, come back,
Scent of white eucrephia stars blown on winds of Memory,
Glint and gleam of fagus gold adown the torrent's track.

Half my heart is buried there, buried high on Hamilton,
Lonely is the sepulchre with never stone for sign,
Where the nodding myrtle-plumes stand like sable sentinels
And the ruddy rimony wreathes the hooded pine.

Half my heart is yearning yet, yearning yet for Hamilton,
Hamilton beyond the surge of sobbing Southern main,
O the croon of wistful winds calling, calling, calling me,
Where the mottled mountain thrush is singing in the rain.

We shall ne'er go back again, back again to Hamilton,
Heart o' me, our track is toward the heart of burning day,
Hills beyond the call of hills beaconing and beckoning—
Westward, westward winds the track, a thread of dusky grey.

## LESLIE HOLDSWORTH ALLEN

1879–

124

### *Memnon*

When I was a burst of thunder
Born on the Nubian cliffs,
And the sands flashed white in wonder
And in Khem the curious glyphs
Shone out from the cavern-tombs
On the huddled bats in the glooms,
'Mid the great stone kings I rumbled
That sit by the river-brinks,
And my sand-clouds eddied and tumbled
Round the old stare of the Sphinx;
Then with harsh-throated cries
I burst on Memnon's eyes.

The force of me made no quiver
In that earth-ancient gaze;
I felt my raging shiver
And shrink to desert-haze,
And heard in the dawning gold
The stillness of music old.

## 125 *Bush Goblins*

The locust drones along the drowsy noon,
The brown bee lingers in the yellow foam,
Blossom on blossom searching deep, but soon
Slides heavy-wingèd home.

The vacant air, half visible, complains
All overburdened of its noontide hour;
Sound after sound in heavy silence wanes
At the strong sun's burning power.

Let the strong sun burn down the barren plain
And scour the empty heaven, and twist the air
To filmiest flickerings, o'er us in vain
His hollow vault doth glare.

For us gnarled boughs and massive boles o'ershade,
And tall bulrushes guard us with green spears
From the grim noon; our dewy jewelled glade
Never a footstep nears.

Come feast with us; behold our fragrant store
Of candide locusts, that no longer drone
Through summer eves, but transmigrated, pour
Thin goblin monotone

Through eucalyptine stillness as we rouse
Our gnomy anthem to the answering trees,
While gold-eyed toad-guards of our hidden house
Croak full-fed choruses.

Come visit us; O follow till you find
In some green shade our secret banquetings,
Where brolgas dance, and, some great stem behind,
A hidden lyrebird sings.

Ask of the eaglehawk in the blue air,
Ask of the chattering parrot, he should tell;
Fat possum in the tree bole, furry bear,
Us beast and bird know well.

The silver lizard on the sun-baked stone,
The green-flecked tree-snake in his circle coiled,
Dreaming of evil, man, and man alone
Missed us, howe'er he toiled.

Come feast thou with us; ancient kings of all,
We are the mystery at the heart of noon,
Weird unseen chucklers when long shadows fall
From the misleading moon.

We are the spirits of distorted trees;
We beckon down the dim gullies, far astray,
Till lost, deep lost, the wild-eyed traveller sees
Dark at the heart of day.

And oh, we laughed about his last choked groans
Beside the water that he sought so long,
And oh, we danced about his clean-picked bones
To a gnomy undersong.

For all the day we chuckle and provoke
With mocking shapes and noises each bright hour,
But when dark even from his grave hath broke
Then are we lords of power.

## FRANK WILMOT (FURNLEY MAURICE)

1881–1942

### 126 *Progress*

THEY'VE builded wooden timber tracks,
And a trolley with screaming brakes
Noses into the secret bush,
Into the birdless brooding bush,
And the tall old gums it takes.

And down in the sunny valley,
The snorting saw screams slow;
Oh bush that nursed my people,
Oh bush that cursed my people,
That flayed and made my people,
I weep to watch you go.

### 127 *The Last Port*

I WROUGHT and battled and wept, near and afar
I scanned the secret of the bud and star.

Hill-road and desert, and the hurrying street
Know well the impress of my restless feet.

Then someone came with soft, caressing glance,
Slow, like a woman out of all romance.

Love closed around me these warm, folded wings—
That was the end of all my wanderings.

## 128 *Fellow-Passengers*

This man has written songs,
And this has builded bridges;
One preaches workers' wrongs,
One vivisects the midges;
And so they sit together,
On all days and all weather—
All in the same tram faring,
Solemn, and little caring.

One has lived on a glacier,
One in a house of detention;
One tells stories racier
Than I would care to mention.
But no man knows his neighbour,
His leisure or his labour—
All in the same tram faring,
Solemn, and little caring.

One is an old platelayer,
And one is a king of beauty;
Here is an ore assayer,
And a parson preaching duty.
Some tongues are always going,
But never the true heart showing—
All in the same tram faring,
Solemn, and little caring.

## *129 To God: From the Warring Nations*

1

We have been dead, our shroud enfolds the sea,
Honour 's a rag tossed out for winds to rend,
And Virtue is most shamed, and Lust goes free,
While trembling Wisdom vainly seeks a friend.
Our heroes lost in trenches or the wave,
Are dust or rag, but no more dead than we,
Consigning to this universal grave
All that is known of trust and charity.
For we assigned ourselves the frightful task
Of healing tender wounds with filthy hands;
O, God, look not into our souls, nor ask
Defence of our loose scorn of Love's demands,
But help us that we consecrate to Thee
The remnant of our soiled humanity.

2

We pray for pity, Lord, not justice; we,
Being but mortal, offer mortal tears;
For Justice would mean further cruelty,
And we have had enough inhuman years.
Guard our repute! We have grown gross and mean,
Who hoped to tell the future something clean!
We come, debauched, hoping and hoping not,
Drunken with blood, burdened with all distress,
Craving for pity, Lord, who have forgot
The name and manner of sweet gentleness.
We being mortal, love may come again;
Hold back severity—we are but men.

Ah! pity, Lord! Can all indulgence find
  Hope in the devious, devil-ways to Peace,
Of shamefaced, shuddering remnants of mankind
  All murdering, none brave enough to cease?
Redeem us by Thy hope lest Thy disgust
Makes future empires violate our dust.

3

We've smashed the tablets and the songs, forsworn
  The passionate sweet pity that once reigned
Imperial; must constant fear suborn
  The hearts that guilt and grossness have so stained?
Could we be as we were ere battle came,
We would not talk of guile or separate blame.
Search not our records for the first dark ruse,
  Let the past go, sin is an old affair;
We plead for pity, Lord, not for our dues,
  We, being sinners all, must share and share.
Let us, all sinners, and all stained with blood,
  Weary with bitter consciences and lies,
Assemble in a sinners' brotherhood
  And pour out tears from our repentant eyes,
Tears for such wrongs that only tears repair.

4

Ours is no cry of creed, O Lord, or race,
  But all the men the battles leave to live,
Cry from the abject pit of their disgrace,
  Implore their pitying Father to forgive.
So help them that they consecrate to Thee
The remnant of their poor humanity.

Riot, destruction, lust, all these prevailed,
Reason and quiet grappled, sank, and died.
Our soldiers, dreaming of home gardens, failed
Seeing their final dawn in the red tide.
From home's enduring husbandries beguiled,
Hope rode in gladness from his ivied tower.
The sun was gold upon his shining dress,
But where romance and gallantry might flower
The fight showed only blood and beastliness,
And all the fanes of all the gods defiled.
This thing we might forget and no more see
If Thou wouldst slay this spectre memory.

5

We have been cruel in thought. Life 's not so sweet
With pearls and pleasures that the race should set
Its ardour to destruction. Brutal feet
Destroy the roses. God, let us forget
That we accused of barbarous intent
The foe that lies in death magnificent.
How can we hate forever, having proved
All men are bright and brave and somewhere loved?
For every man has courage, all are peerless;
Each man reigns in his region, sovereign, free;
But we have broken blessèd men and fearless,
Each in his deep and separate agony.
We have cast curses upon unknown names
And we have fallen from our vows and Thee,
Gazed tearlessly on tortured human frames,
And manacled the tongue of equity.

Oh, we have murdered hope and babes and things
  Wrought by inspired fingers joyously;
Earth and her vines may shroud our murderings,
  But what shall kill immortal memory?

6

We have drawn hearty boys eager to live,
  Into the ghastly hells of guns we made;
Bewildered mothers who were glad to give,
  Took war's enormous wastage unafraid.
With resignation terrible to see
  They suffered questionless the deathly toll,
Waiting for woe, for hope, for what might be—
  Knowing that life is carrion and a soul.
And is man's battle, anguish still more deep
  Than those sharp mother pangs that give men birth?
Pain begets pain, and curses curses reap,
  Travail is useless, sacrifice no worth,
For we have shown the world a bitter thing,
Men suffering for no end but suffering.

7

Can men forever hate? We who have slain
  The dread of death shall kill blind hate as well;
Our bodies grown superior to pain,
  Our hearts shall learn the love the Legends tell.
O, foeman, who wast valorous, we crave
  Forgiveness for the crimes we would forgive.
All men have sinned, but God made all men brave,
We ask forgiveness by this sullen grave,
  And a little time, a little time to live.

A little time to live and forget in the world
The years of swords and horrors we repent,
Forget the doom and savage curses hurled
On foes like us, misguided, hopeful, spent.
O, God, men did not know men were so brave
Till foes stood silent by the choking grave.

8

You made us for the light; where now stand we?
O pity, Lord, our poor humanity.
Or that You might with one dissolving breath
Erase from time and human memory
Power's devastating panders crying 'Death!'
And our poor stripped and stained mortality
Hunted through new terrific wastes in vain,
Through darks that dim all love and love's belief,
Past iron sorcerers inventing grief,
Down spiral hells like Dante's pain to pain,
Or turn by other roads remote from these,
The soul's desire to gentler husbandries.
You made us for the light, and here we tramp
The murky passages of death and gloom.
We, being greatly gifted, shattered the Lamp,
Debased our altitude, devised more doom.
Have we been valiant? Ah, petty pride—
Teach us to live as bravely as we died.
Though much is taken, much is still to lose,
War has not yet consumed Thy sheltering grace
O, God, recall Thy peoples ere they bruise
The old unbroken spirit of Thy race.

Ere we, who held Thy torch, are doomed to climb
From darks again, condemned to see afar,
From timeless depths of catastrophic slime,
The distant gleam of our forsaken star.

9

The house of Faith and Wisdom, stone and beam,
In travail and devotion have we raised;
Now through the ruined terraces of dream
The blind Soul wanders, homelessly and dazed.
Dazedly she wonders who has done this thing,
What power wrought this senseless ravaging?
Souls sacrificial, consecrated years,
Out of deep contemplation and calm thought
Cemented with high faith and suffering's tears,
Stone upon chiselled stone her temple wrought.
Can we face any more those eyes of pain
Now we have wrecked what shall not rise again?
O, God, forget those hours of ignorance;
Youth and the dreamers give their hearts in fee;
Allow the broken traitors one more chance,
And recompose our poor humanity.
We've ruined dreams, canst Thou forgive us, then,
Who have destroyed the providence of men?

10

The dreamers wait. What can the spirit urge
Against the madness of this sorry day?
How can the timid form of Peace emerge
Unless the marshals let the dreamers say?
And they are few and most forsaken, Lord,
Who slaved and suffered for their human hope,

Though Thou shalt give the martyrs to the sword,
  Preserve the future from the hangman's rope!
Preserve for us, O God, the voice of those
  Who, towering o'er the tempest, speak not yet
With audibility, the battle throws
  Their protest back against their faces, wet
  With tears of helplessness and huge regret.
Preserve them for the moment when their word
Above the ruinous carnage may be heard.

11

We cannot fight forever; when the domes
  Of Truth's avoided temple surely gleam
Above wrecked cities and forsaken homes,
  Men will desert the battle for the dream—
For dreams are stronger than armies in the end;
  Old, bitter men defile the house of Truth,
Decree: 'There stands your foeman, here your friend,'
  Declare their bloody wars that slaughter youth
Till youth's fair hopes in flames of war contend.

12

Ah, Youth, old as the world is not so wise!
  The serpent tongue poisons the heart with hate,
Sets down a rule of war, a rune of lies
  That have no right at all—the dreamers wait,
Remembering the precept and the plan,
  The changeless laws that angry men forget,
The just and splendid destiny of man
  The quarreling peoples must acknowledge yet.
Then call Thou home the bold, young boys again,
  Who front a ruthless and bewildering fate;
Call home the young who suffer senseless pain,
  And leave the war to those who taught them hate.

13

The wisdom of our strength comes very slow,
  The current of wild wills is subtly hid.
We sometimes ask: 'How ever could we know,
  We wilful, fumbling children, what we did?'
We nurtured means of killing that exhaust
  The mode and quickness of an expert Death;
And not one fell in all the holocaust
  But fell because of some one's little faith.
Forget, O Lord, the shrapnel and the lance,
The bloody plots, the brooding arrogance!

14

We have been dead, our hearts are crusted round
  With horn and hardness, black brutality
Flowed into us a glory and sweet sound,
  And we have worshipped those, forgetting Thee.
To have forgotten in the rage and stress
  Might leave our absolution undenied,
But the whole import of our guiltiness
  Is that, forgetting, we forgot with pride.
For Thou hast given wit and hands and fire,
  And when we saw our huge converters blast
Their jewelled fumes to Heaven, our desire
  Yearned a proud conquest equally as vast.
We saw the steel run bubbling in the mould,
  And, disremembering where we began,
'This steel,' we cried, 'is conquest, power untold!
  God is a prisoner to revolted man!'
And when we watched the Dreadnoughts thrust the weight
  Of waves aside, and heard our cannon lift
A mountain into dust, we saw our fate
  Gigantic without Thee—and cut adrift.

15

Thou gavest steel to us, Thou gavest brain,
Thou gavest patience; we grew grossly great;
And we have used Thy steel Thy will to chain,
But Thou hast burst those bonds; now we await
Thy judgment, who have meddled with Thy things.
We thought to snare the sacred flame from Thee—
Look on our broken hands, our withered wings,
And pity, Lord, our poor humanity.

*130* *1914*

The Sparrow has gone home into the tree;
And the belled cattle, vague and pensive-eyed,
Drowse in the twilight; to the red cliffside
Comes but a faded murmur of the sea.
Comes down the night; comes down reluctantly
The mist upon the hill whence soon shall glide
A pale and bashful moon; with arms spread wide
Affrighted pixies seek the dark from me.

These shall return; the mountains and the haze,
The blue lobelias ledging all the lawns,
The pixies, the lost roads and the sun-blaze,
These waters surge to-morrow to this shore—
All these things shall return with other dawns
But pity to the hearts of men no more.

## 131 *A Melbourne Ode*

*The Agricultural Show,*
*Flemington, Victoria*

I

THE lumbering tractor rolls its panting round,
The windmills fan the blue; feet crush the sand;
The pumps spurt muddy water to the sound,
The muffled thud and blare of a circus band.

II

For this is the other life I know so little of,
A life of fevered effort, of wool and tortured love!
Why didn't somebody tell me ere 'twas too late to learn
This life with its fire and vigour, by brake and anguished burn,
Gorgeous and ghastly and rare,
Flourished out there, out there?
But I just sit in a tram and pay my fare;
Me, an important man in the job I hold.
But there, there are the roots of the hills of gold
That my clawed fingers tell.
Why didn't somebody say before I was old
That there were brumbies to break and these store mobs to muster
When I was bred to the clang of a tram bell,
Answered an 'ad' and took up a shopman's duster?

III

Here is a world that stands upon sun and rain
In a humid odour of wool where the sheafing grain
Falls like pay in the palm.
I but rode out the calm
In a regular job and felt the years fall by
To a pension and senile golf; that 's the whole tale;
But there 's another world in the white of a bullock's eye
Strained as he horns a rail.

I, with an unshod outlaw between my knees
Dream, but awake to the old 'Fares please, fares please.'
The long low bellowing of yarded herds,
The song of sweating horsemen on the plains,
The outlaw's mating scream,
Drought and the offal-birds,
Yellowing lemons and longed-for rains—
That was the dream.

IV

Here Science like a helpful angel lifts
The drag, straightens the backs and shortens shifts;
While in the town
Men are the engine's slaves
And, drunk with Science, pull the lever down
And stagger into fragmentary graves.

The tractors pant their tract,
The combs of the reapers thrust
Their yielding paths and the stooks are stacked
While clumsy thumbs adjust

The flayer's beating thongs
And evening with tired songs
Sinks down upon the dust.
What load do the geldings carry?
What load do the bullocks drag
Worse than the loads of fear that harry
The city salesman with his bag?
Salesmen and bullocks stagger in the chains
And their red nostrils snuffle at the dust,
Lashed through life and death in the frightful lust
Of urgency that coils in men's mad brains.

V

For there are many worlds to taunt our faith;
The fabled cattle-hills, the green wool-plains;
But fair or fabulous, fact or thin as a wraith
All drift into feverish sums of losses and gains.

Man's god is what he gets his living by;
No doubt this nuzzling litter of auburn swine
Came like an old Venetian argosy
Laden with all the elegant stuffs
For shining hose and scented ruffs,
Its bellying topsails gleaming in the sun
Along the horizon line—
To some bush-whiskered father of a run.

This lustful stallion, Pegasus without wings,
Is a feather-legged temple in a desert place;
This sleek ring-nostrilled bull is King of Kings,
And doe-eyed Jerseys mumble Heaven's grace.

The cloying odour of the milking sheds.
The docking days, the branding days, perchance
The springing pasterns of the thoroughbreds
Are all mere counters of deliverance.

VI

Many the urgent calls of the cocky's day;
What of his play?
'Within,' the Mongolian Giant is on sight—
And here's his boot to whet the appetite.
The spruiker with his flowery talk enjoins
Me and my likes to view the abortive things
That nestle under the marquee's greasy wings—
A patient, worn-out woman collects the coins.
Not tired snakes nor dancing dogs,
Nor green and human frogs,
Nor ladies bearded or fat,
Nor shark nor seven-teated cow,
Nor feat of horsemanship
Could stir a calm like that,
Put a white tremor on her lip
Or raise the cynically disillusioned brow.
Worn out no doubt is she
With the joy of looking, free,
Too long at each inane monstrosity
Till there 's no more wonder
On earth or under
The sea.
But wayback Dan closes a week's carouse
With one long, sixpenny look at a three-tailed mouse.

VII

I've heard the waggon-wheels grinding by ruts and stumps,
Scouring the black night for a possible camp;
I've watched the breeching flop on the horses' rumps
In the green light of a wavering bottle-lamp.
And I have come at last on a sweet home and a bed
And woke to see through the broken blind a munching cow at the bail,
To hear, while the magpies yodelled in the slow dawn's searching spread,
The sharp spurt of the milk into the pail.

VIII

The things of the body pass,
And these are of the day;
The things that nourish
The body flourish
In weather and sun
But soon, like flowers, they're done
And leave no husk.
But the mind's things pass
Not readily away;
The mind goes like a camel in the dusk
Nibbling the grass
Between the stones of the tombs
Or gorging among the sheaves
Of blotted leaves
That fall from the housèd looms.
So while the aeons run
Hearts leap and brains contrive;
Honey is of the sun
But there 's no sun in the hive.

IX

The morning pastures of the spirit spread
Their dewy carpets for anointed feet,
But the lashed herd and the shearing shed,
These are man's clothes and meat.
For there are many worlds to plague our hopes,
Crumbling owl-haunted belfries of 'perhaps,'
And lantern-lighted alleys whence the stranger gropes
His way to the Andean slopes,
And old stone stairs of faith scooped out by a myriad
feet,
Green at the base, where timeless water laps.
Though there are many worlds, none is complete.

X

For all the yellowing melons of marvellous size,
And dogs that pen their sheep from the drover's eyes,
And the hew and thew
Of the beanstalk axemen climbing to the blue,
We all turn homeward dusty and overcast
By a sense of cattle-hills without a name;
Carrying bags of samples of the vast
Uncomprehended regions whence they came.
Drenched with the colour of unexperienced days
We go our different ways;
Stallions loose on the plains; apples of Hesperides;
Quiet lakes and milking sheds; 'Fares please, fares
please.'

## ENID DERHAM

1882–1941

### 132 *The Suburbs*

Miles and miles of quiet houses, every house a harbour,
Each for some unquiet soul a haven and a home,
Pleasant fires for winter nights, for sun the trellised arbour,
Earth the solid underfoot, and heaven for a dome.

Washed by storms of cleansing rain, and sweetened with affliction,
The hidden wells of Love are heard in one low-murmuring voice
That rises from this close-meshed life so like a benediction
That, listening to it, in my heart I almost dare rejoice.

### 133 *Farewell*

I leave the world to-morrow,
What news for Fairyland?
I'm tired of dust and sorrow
And folk on every hand.

A moon more calm and splendid
Moves there through deeper skies,
By maiden stars attended
She paces goddess-wise.

And there no wrath oppresses,
And there no teardrops start,
There cool winds breathe caresses,
That soothe the weary heart.

The wealth the mad world follows
  Turns ashes in the hand
Of him who sees the hollows
  And glades of Fairyland.

And pine boughs sigh no sorrow
  Where fairy rotas play,—
I leave the world to-morrow
  For ever and a day.

## 134 *O City, look the Eastward Way*

O CITY, look the Eastward way!
Beyond thy roofs of shadowy red and grey
Floats like a lily on the airy stream,
Radiant and vast, a cloud,
Around whose billowy head
Splendour from out the glooming West is shed
As if it were not ever to take flight,—
And on its edge of gleam
In the clear blue of waning afternoon,
Faint as a spirit slipping from the shroud,
Faint, and yet gathering light,
The Moon.

O city, dream and pray!
This is thy evensong at close of day.

## 135 *The Mountain Road*

COMING down the mountain road
  Light of heart and all alone,
I caught from every rill that flowed
  A rapture of its own.

Heart and mind sang on together,
  Rhymes began to meet and run
In the windy mountain weather
  And the winter sun.

Clad in freshest light and sweet
  Far and far the city lay
With her suburbs at her feet
  Round the laughing bay.

Like an eagle lifted high
  Half the radiant world I scanned,
Till the deep unclouded sky
  Circled sea and land.

No more was thought a weary load,
  Older comforts stirred within,
Coming down the mountain road
  The earth and I were kin.

## 136 *The Apple Tree*

A MAIDEN sat in an apple tree,
Oh, and the blossoms round her!
A maiden sat in an apple tree,
'Twas there that I found her,
'Twas there in a dapple of sun,
In a smother of snow-flake petals,
I saw her swinging
Her feet, and singing
'One, two, three—one, two, three, one,
Two, three'
To the fall of the apple petals:
Ah me!

The maiden, she had laughing eyes,
And her frock was like a cloud,
And the voice of her was like her eyes,
And softer than a cloud,
And over me came sudden spell,
Hearing the falling, 'one—two—three'
Of the maiden's counting
And the snow-flakes mounting
At the foot of the apple-tree;
One fell,
Two fell, and three, and the spell on me;
Ah well!

A shudder ran like a run of wind
Over the apple tree; she
Felt the wind, but only a wind
Stirring the apple tree;

It was the wind of life
Trimming the Spring; what but Summer's breath
Taking the swinging
Feet, and singing—
'one, two, three—one, two, three—one, two'—Death!
Oh Spring,
To maid of the flowering apple-breath
Clinging!

## 137 *Peace*

All this is vanity.
How may I find cool peace
And sovereign sanity
In din's unfettered lease?

Nay, I will cool my eyes
With flowers; who can say,
Beneath familiar skies
There is a better way?

Last night's midsummer rain
Has scattered sequins bright
On leaf and grass; no stain
Is there in this sharp light.

I have not tasted life so sweet
Since youth forsook me; yea,
I must go out with naked feet,
And cool the years away.

There is such sanity in grass;
It leaves me wondering
How I, unseeing, ever pass
Its lyric thundering.

138

## *When I was Six*

When I was only six years old,
Heigh-ho! for Folly O!
I wandered in a fairy fold,
Heigh holly! to and fro.

I rode upon a blossom's back
Up hill and over sea;
And all the little pixie pack
For fun would follow me.

O, golden was the gown I wore
Of buttercups and air,
And twenty diamond stars or more
Were pinned upon my hair.

All day I chased the laughing sky
Above the busy town,
But when the moon unwinked her eye,
Ho, ho! I hurried down.

And then within the baby's shoe
I hid my lady's pearls.
From maid to merry maid I flew
And knotted all their curls.

I pulled the preacher's saintly gown,
And lost his open page.
I tickled out the withered frown
Of every sallow sage.

And when the children were abed,
I tapped the window-pane,
And laughed as some one softly said:
'Whist! goblins there again!'

Ho, ho! I flitted here and there
Amid my elfin band,
While on the green, in frolic fair,
We tripped it hand in hand.

As air and moonlight I was free
Within that fairy fold,
For all the world belonged to me
When I was six years old.

139

## *Woman*

I AM the luring Vivien
With eyes too bright for mortal men,
With lithe, long fingers full of fire
And lips alight with love's desire.

*O man of mine, come down, come down,*
*Across the bush and bracken brown!*
*I am the luring Vivien*
*Who kisses sages young agen.*

I carol Lurlei's siren song
O'er magic waters, deep and long
Wide depths of green enchanted seas
And luscious caves of coral ease.

*O man of mine, row out, row out*
*Where creek and river wind about!*
*I carol Lurlei's siren song*
*Of love that drowns in rapture strong.*

I hold the cup that Circe held
When man to brutish beast she spelled.
The wine is red. The wine is sweet
With passion's scent and joy complete.

*O man of mine, come drink, come drink,*
*The spell is bubbling to the brink!*
*I hold the cup that Circe held*
*With charms as soft as fears dispelled.*

I am a luring singing witch,
With spells and potions white and rich.
I gather them at early morn
Before the first black lamb is born.

*O man of mine, be true, be true;*
*Such sorcery was made by you!*
*I learned it when I was a child,*
*But had forgot it till you smiled.*

## VANCE PALMER 1885–

### 140 *The Pathfinders*

NIGHT, and a bitter sky, and strange birds crying,
The wan trees whisper and the winds make moan,
Here where in ultimate peace their bones are lying
In gaunt waste places that they made their own,
Beyond the ploughed lands where the corn is sown.

Death, and untrodden ways, and night before them,
From sheltering homes and friendly hearths they came;
Far from the mouldering dust of those that bore them
They rest in silence now and know no fame,
No proud stone speaks, no waters lip the name.

Brave and undaunted hearts, eyes lit with laughter,
Minds that outran the ancient doubts and fears,
They blazed the track for legions following after,
And bared new treasure to the hungry years,
Till spent with strife they sank amongst the spears.

Slow sinks the glowing flame and fades the ember,
No bright star flickers and the woods are stark,
But still our children's children will remember
The swift forerunners, bearers of the ark,
Who lit the beacons in the uncharted dark.

Rich towns shall flourish on the hills that hold them,
Bright dreams shall quicken from their wandering dust,
And till the end our reverent minds shall fold them
In storied chambers free from moth and rust:
The fealty pledged, the kingdom given in trust.

## 141 *Youth and Age*

Youth that rides the wildest horse,
Youth that throws the deadliest steer,
Spending strength without remorse,
Grappling with the ghosts of fear,
Knows it only holds to-day
All it freely flings away.

Youth that rides a race with Death
When the frightened cattle break,
Living in the moment's breath,
Risking all for honour's sake,
Lightly knows it holds in fee
Life and immortality.

Age that rides the spavined grey,
  Age that seeks the safest track,
Scenting perils by the way,
  Dreaming of the journey back,
Leaves behind it all the truth
Known to the wild heart of youth.

## FRITZ S. BURNELL

1886–

142

### *The Pool*

Beside the pale water
Linger chapman and churl;
Prince, poet; boy and girl;
Harlot and king's daughter.

Over the dark hedge climb
White stars like roses:
Dark hedge that encloses
The dusty road of Time.

Herein all men
Gaze, as in a glass,
Awhile; then pass
Down the long road again,

Murmuring a vague surmise,
A bitter word, or a jest:
With head sunken on breast;
Or erect, with shining eyes. . . .

For, as upon their way
They stoop to drink
Beside the reedy brink,
They see in the water grey,

Some, their own idle faces;
Some, ripples that die
Stilly, mysteriously,
Of an unseen wind the traces;

Some, but the slime below,
Black and rotting; some,
Only the idle scum
Drifting to and fro.

But some, with clearer view,
In the pool's heart behold
Bright stars manifold,
And God's arched heaven blue. . . .

To the grey pool all men
Come, one by one, to drink
Awhile at its reedy brink,
And tread the road again. . . .

## 143 *The Isle of Apple-trees*

THERE came a little light-foot breeze a-dancing down the bay,
It kissed me on my lips and eyes, and oh, my heart was fey!
For the blue hills, the true hills, the sickle-sweep of sand,
The glen that opened out beyond, the trees on either hand.
For white against the darkling wood, beyond the shoreward seas,
I knew that you were waiting in the Isle of Apple-trees.

The broad red sail dropped slowly down, the anchor-stone splashed clear;
The sea-birds rose, a screaming cloud, before our sailors' cheer.
I took no heed of wave or weed, but fared in haste to shore,
In dread the dream might fade away, and I should dream no more.
For well I knew I dreamed; but oh! I prayed it might not cease
Ere you and I had met amid the Isle of Apple-trees.

How all the faery woodland sought to stay me from my quest!
A thousand unseen voices woke strange fancies in my breast.
But I stayed not, delayed not, to Aengus I prayed,
Through numberless beguilings I passed into the glade.
The blue sea crooned beneath the hill, and overhead the breeze
As our lips met and our hearts met in the Isle of Apple-trees.

O far-off, faery isle of dreams! Once more let me discern
The water-fall, half-light, half-song, that laughed among the fern;
The high hills, the shy hills, a-dreaming in the mist;
The scented air, the heavy boughs, the hedges sunny-kissed!

I'm hearing still the wailing of the birds and of the breeze,
For the love I found and lost again in the Isle of Apple-trees!

Oh, little hands and dewy lips, and softly-shining eyes,
Have you for ever fled? My heart is sick with memories.
Why have you made me half afraid lest all my search prove vain,
And ne'er till all the world grow cold we two shall meet again?
O life or death or hell or heaven! What should I care for these?
I have forgot the pathway to the Isle of Apple-trees!

## NETTIE PALMER

### 144 *Unsung*

When shall I make a song for you, my love?
When you are nigh me?
Not so, for then the hours unnamed go by me,
Flocking like dove on dove.

When shall that song for you be found, my mate?
When I wait lonely?
Not so, for then am I a mourner only,
Begging without the gate.

Never in words that happy song will rise,
Yet you will feel it,—
Through days your love makes glad I shall reveal it,
Through years your love makes wise.

## 145 *The Mother*

In the sorrow and the terror of the nations,
In a world shaken through by lamentations,
Shall I dare know happiness
That I stitch a baby's dress?

So: for I shall be a mother with the mothers,
I shall know the mother's anguish like the others,
Present joy must surely start
For the life beneath my heart.

Gods and men, ye know a woman's glad unreason,
How she cannot bend and weep but in her season,
Let my hours with rapture glow
As the seams and stitches grow.

And I cannot hear the word of fire and slaughter;
Do men die? Then live, my child, my son, my daughter!
Into realms of pain I bring
You for joy's own offering.

## 146 *The Welcome*

Did you know, little child,
Ere you left the outer wild,
There were strong hands steady,
There were old songs ready,
There was love prepared to keep you with the hard earth reconciled?

Did you learn beyond the moon
All the happy sounds of noon?
  A creek's voice will greet you,
  A wattle bend to meet you,
There are visions, there are voices: you will know
    them soon and soon.

Yes, for you will surely go
Where the deepest gullies grow,
  They will feel you and take you,
  With birds to lure and wake you,
They will set your spirit dancing, they will tell you all
    they know.

There beneath the radiant dome
Unafraid your feet will roam,
  With the soft creek lapping,
  And the loose bark flapping,
While the waving tree-ferns whisper, 'Little girl,
    you've wandered home.'

## ELSIE COLE

### 147 *Song of the Foot-Track*

Come away, come away from the straightness of the
    road;
  I will lead you into delicate recesses
Where peals of ripples ring through the maidenhair's
    abode
  In the heart of little water wildernesses.

I will show you pleasant places; tawny hills the sun has kissed,
Where the giant trees the wind is always swinging
Rise from clouds of pearly saplings tipped with rose and amethyst,—
Fairy boughs where fairy butterflies are clinging.

Come away from the road; I will lead through shade and sheen,
Changing brightly as the year of colour passes
Through each tint the opal knows, from the flaming winter green
To the summer gold and silver of the grasses.

Here is a riot of leaf and blossom, ferny mosses in the glade
Pressing round the wattle's stem of dappled splendour;
Even the pathway that you tread smiles with daisies unafraid,—
Laden branches lean to breathe a welcome tender.

Come away from the road; let wild petals cool your eyes
Dim and hardened with the arid light of duty;
Lose awhile your weary purpose, leave the highway of the wise
For the little reckless track of joy and beauty.

I am fairer still to follow where the Bush is lonelier grown
And the purple vines fling tendrils out to bind me;
For the secret of my lure is the call of the Unknown,
Hidden Lovelieness that laughs: *'Come and find me!'*

Follow on, ah, come with me! Though the way is fainter shown
Where the restless waves of green have splashed and crossed me;
In the temple of the trees you have met delight alone;
Winning happiness, what matter though you lost me?

In this dreamy fane of sunshine, where wood-violets are rife,
Though I leave you,—path and bracken surges blended,—
Would you say I led you vainly? I have sung the joy of life,
I have set you in the way; my song is ended.

## DOROTHEA MACKELLAR

148

### *My Country*

The love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins;
Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies—
I know but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.

I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror—
The wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests,
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The hot gold hush of noon.
Green tangle of the brushes,
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us,
We see the cattle die—
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the Rainbow Gold,
For flood and fire and famine,
She pays us back threefold;
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,
  A wilful, lavish land—
All you who have not loved her,
  You will not understand—
Though earth holds many splendours,
  Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
  My homing thoughts will fly.

## 149 *The Open Sea*

From my window I can see,
Where the sandhills dip,
One far glimpse of open sea.
Just a slender slip
Curving like a crescent moon—
Yet a greater prize
Than the harbour garden-fair
Spread beneath my eyes.

Just below me swings the bay,
Sings a sunny tune,
But my heart is far away
Out beyond the dune;
Clearer far the sea-gulls' cry
And the breakers' roar,
Than the little waves beneath
Lapping on the shore.

For that strip of sapphire sea
Set against the sky
Far horizons means to me—
And the ships go by
Framed between the empty sky
And the yellow sands,
While my freed thoughts follow them
Out to other lands.

All its changes who can tell?
I have seen it shine
Like a jewel polished well,
Hard and clear and fine;
Then soft lilac—and again
On another day
Glimpsed it through a veil of rain,
Shifting, drifting grey.

When the livid waters flee,
Flinching from the storm,
From my window I can see,
Standing safe and warm,
How the white foam tosses high
On the naked shore,
And the breakers' thunder grows
To a battle-roar. . . .

Far and far I look—Ten miles?
No, for yesterday
Sure I saw the Blessèd Isles
Twenty worlds away.
My blue moon of open sea,
Is it little worth?
At the least it gives to me
Keys of all the earth!

## 150 *In a Southern Garden*

When the tall bamboos are clicking to the restless
little breeze,
And bats begin their jerky skimming flight,
And the creamy scented blossoms of the dark pittos-
porum trees,
Grow sweeter with the coming of the night.

And the harbour in the distance lies beneath a purple
pall,
And nearer, at the garden's lowest fringe,
Loud the water soughs and gurgles 'mid the rocks
below the wall,
Dark-heaving, with a dim uncanny tinge

Of a green as pale as beryls, like the strange faint-
coloured flame
That burns around the Women of the Sea.
And the strip of sky to westward which the camphor
laurels frame,
Has turned to ash-of-rose and ivory—

And a chorus rises valiantly from where the crickets
hide,
Close-shaded by the balsams drooping down—
It is evening in a garden by the kindly water-side,
A garden near the lights of Sydney town!

1891–1927

## 151 *Experience*

I MUST be dreaming through the days
And see the world with childish eyes
If I'd go singing all my life,
And my songs be wise.

And in the kitchen or the house
Must wonder at the sights I see.
And I must hear the throb and hum
That moves to song in factory.

So much in life remains unsung,
And so much more than love is sweet;
I'd like a song of kitchenmaids
With steady fingers and swift feet.

And I could sing about the rest
That breaks upon a woman's day
When dinner 's over and she lies
Upon her bed to dream and pray.

Until the children come from school
And all her evening work begins;
There 's more in life than tragic love
And all the storied, splendid sins.

## LESBIA HARFORD

### 152 *Lovers Parted*

Old memories waken old desires
Infallibly. While we're alive
With eye or ear or sense at all,
Sometimes, must love revive.

But we'll not think, when some stray gust
Relumes the flicker of desire
That fuel of circumstance could make
A furnace of our fire.

The past is gone. We must believe
It has no power to change our lives,
Yet still our constant hearts rejoice
Because the past survives.

## LEON GELLERT

1892–

### 153 *The Husband*

Yes, I have slain, and taken moving life
From bodies. Yea! And laughed upon the taking;
And, having slain, have whetted still the knife
For more and more, and heeded not the making
Of things that I was killing. Such 'twas then!
But now the thirst so hideous has left me.
I live within a coolness, among calm men,
And yet am strange. A something has bereft me
Of a seeing, and strangely love returns;
And old desires half-known, and hanging sorrows.
I seem agaze with wonder. Memory burns.
I see a thousand vague and sad to-morrows.
None sees my sadness. No one understands
How I must touch her hair with bloody hands.

## 154 *The Cross*

'I WEAR a cross of bronze,' he said,
'And men have told me I was brave.'
He turned his head,
And, pointing to a grave,
'They told me that my work of war was done.'
His fierce mouth set.
'And yet, and yet . . .'
He trembled where he stood.
'And yet, and yet . . .
I have not won
That broken cross of wood!'

## 155 *Through a Porthole*

IF you could lie upon this berth, this berth whereon I lie,
If you could see a tiny peak uplift its tingèd tusk,
If you could see the purple hills against the changing sky,
And see a shadowed pinnace lying in the dusk;
If you could see the sabre-moon shining on the deep:
You'd say the world was not unkind, but just a sleeping child,
You'd say the world had gone to sleep,
And while it slept
It smiled.

MARIAN WEIGALL

## 156 *Friendship*

What have you done, O friend of my life, that I
should desert you,
Now that you seek me no more, here in the hour of
your pride?
Nay, since I bled for you, lied for you, strove with
the world that would hurt you,
Surely our Fate is one, though you may cast me aside.
So, if here's your ambition achieved, and no soul to
gainsay you,
I, too, put up the sword, weary, and glad of an end—
Yet from my solitude watchful, for fear that the
future betray you,
Bringing some darker hour, when you shall call on
your friend.

PAUL L. GRANO

## 157 *Song of the Butcher-bird*

He is in the rung tree,
high, high as can be
and below him and about
the morning's spread out
shining on bush and bough.
Hear now his song flung
the small winds among—
each note dispassionate,
bodiless, delicate,

holds on the sunny air,
holds but a moment there
and oh, is done!
Yet to its very rim
the valley is graced through him,
for silence his song won
curves like a web spun
from create unto Increate.
Hark! anew there ring
drawn from the triune spring
those cool drops articulate,
but scarcely the last heard
when scrubwards the butcher-bird
down from his morning height,
seeking some new delight,
takes floating wing.

Of such notes had David power
in mad Saul's raging hour,
and of such were made
music in Heaven played
to Mary's song,
and tones as these were heard
announcing the Infleshed Word
to shepherd throng.

## 158 *A Word for the Innkeeper*

No luck, there's no room here.
There's not a corner of the yard
but has them sleeping packed
as close as pigeons in a market coop.

I'd not refuse you did I have a spot
where you could even seat yourself and wife.
Look for yourself—baggage and camels, and men,
women and kids—a rowdy, thieving mob,
sprawled everywhere. Now, are you satisfied?
In all my twenty years of keeping inns
I've never seen the like before.
Such avalanche of flesh, such herds of humans!
All day long for days
they've drifted in, mud to the knees,
with blistered feet, fagged, and empty bellied.
They've eaten the whole village out—
there's not a wineskin wet,
not a cheese remains. And bread!
My friend, the baker, fell exhausted in a tub of dough.
They found him sleeping there, a monstrous loaf!
Myself, I haven't slept these three nights past.
I daren't, they'd pinch the very doors for wood.
Well, there it is. There's nothing I can do.
The Government's to blame—
I ask you who but fools would take
a census in the wintertime!
A bitter winter too it is—
And if I *am* a weather-man—they say I am—
my father was, he knew the signs—
the shifting ants for floods, and all the rest—
I'd say the sky is full of snow.
Make on and find some shelter for your wife.
A pretty girl she is. You'll be a father soon?
God grant you, sir, a lusty son.

Let's see, let's see—two hundred yards along
you'll strike a narrow track, a cattle pad,
that branches to the right and leads
into the hills where there are caves.
At least you'll have a roof, and dung for fire—
the cattle shelter there—
but even so they're cleaner than the cattle I have here.
The wind has fallen. There's a flake of snow—
a frozen swallow, if you like poetic terms.
My father was a poet. But you must haste.
Yes, light your lantern now. The stars are
coming out. How sharp and cold they are,
like points of silvered spears! They say
a brand new star arrived the other day
but stars to me are much alike as sheep.
Goodnight, goodnight, my friend. A sound roof,
and a dry bed, and a sunny morning!
Goodnight. See you do not miss the track—
two hundred yards along, and to the right.
Goodnight.

## 159 *Roots Thrust Deep*

Sea-places I think are, oh, all must be, lovely!
Here's Cleveland, its flat farms
prinked out with neat beds
of French beans and beetroot,
lettuce, tomatoes, smooth pines and rough pines,
the sea ever speaking right at its back door,
the sea with its green-blue
patches like cabbage-beds
and splotches of yellow-green
rain-drunk sorghum—
oh, it is lovely, laughing and lovely!

Yet, though it lures, it cannot hold me,
born to dry hills
and rivers whose flow breaks
early in summer
to pools with complexions
of the mud that they sit on,
to dry hills with none
of the greatness of mountains
but rounded and smooth-topped,
gentle and shining
like bald old uncles,
who love to have children playing about them;
to dry hills and creeks,
the sea far from them,
though, summer, we might,
should lusty a south wind
bustle the darkness,
breathe deep and say:
"The sea! smell the sea!"
and we'd smell (or imagine)
the salt of the breakers,
the sharp scent of seaweed.

O laughing sea-places, lovely and laughing,
though I may love you, you cannot hold me!
Roots thrust deep
not disturbed until fruit-set,
and my roots thrust deep
down in the dry hills,
deep in their cores
and curled in their bases,
deep through the creek-beds

down to the lost leads'
drifting gold waters,
till as the grape is
possessed by the soil
its strong roots traverse
the dry hills and rivers
possess my heart;
and though it may gather
loves as it pleases,
live with them lightly
or enjoy them with passion,
they cannot hold it,
nor Cleveland nor Bondi,
Lorne nor Cottesloe,
and this though it will
its own enslavement,
for the dry hills and rivers
possess it still—
possess, though remain
no eye to mark me,
my young friends lost me,
my people scattered,
possess, though to dry hills
and summer-pooled river
I shall never return.
Though, maybe, against
the coming of Judgment,
my soul will seek there
to form it a body
of the things that I loved:
the bow-bend of kite-string

strummed by the southerly;
castles in coals
and the dull red of ochre;
music that mingled
with the breath of the wattle;
the crackle of gorse
and the cries of the finches—
of all that I left
with the dry hills and rivers,
of all that I loved
with an innocent heart.

## J. A. HENDERSON

1894–

### 160 *Who are the Brave?*

The Brave! My land, salute them. Salute your worthy sons.
But, bestowing honour, strive to know the ones
Who bring you real honour. Only fool or knave
Shouts "The Brave are coming" . . . and never sees the brave.

Some are wearing laurel; some, a crown of thorn;
Some are aged with you; some are being born.
Think you epic courage died with storied Greece?
Yet there were, and will be, "victories of peace".

Brave! There is no magic conjures them from war.
The lighted stage has limned them, but they were brave before.
Valour walks beside us. Chivalry begat
Any jungle fighter . . . any jungle rat.

How shall man divide them? It is but a chance,
Among the hurly-burly, death or fortune glance
Where a man is standing; whether he be sung,
Scorned in passing, martyred, wept, or medal-hung.

End this empty talking. End the sham that paints
A few as ribboned heroes . . . the dead as buried saints:
Portioning the glory; making war a start—
An ending—of our courage; the Brave, a race apart.

Not on tinsel glory, not on penny fame
Waits "Well done," my country,—rests a gallant name.
But in walking humbly, knowing with us then,
Your common men and heroes . . . and your heroes common men.

## J. D. BURNS

1895–1915

### 161 *For England*

The bugles of England were blowing o'er the sea,
As they had called a thousand years, calling now to me;
They woke me from dreaming in the dawning of the day,
The bugles of England—and how could I stay?

The banners of England, unfurled across the sea,
Floating out upon the wind, were beckoning to me;
Storm-rent and battle-torn, smoke-stained and grey,
The banners of England—and how could I stay?

O England, I heard the cry of those that died for thee,
Sounding like an organ-voice across the winter sea;
They lived and died for England and gladly went
their way,
England, O England—how could *I* stay?

## LEONARD MANN

1895–

### 162 *Soldiers Overseas*

Australia is a part of us
And we of her; that 's reason why
In jungle and the desert we
Suffer, endure and maybe die.

We could not suffer hostile men
Should tread those streets and plough that land;
Between us and that land, those streets
There is no ordinary bond.

We could not endure we must dwell
Apart from that familiar earth
Which we have made to be like us,
Like which we are by right of birth.

In jungle green and desert dust
We see a small suburban street,
The sun-struck bush and pastured stock,
A beach and gold-dust on the wheat.

I can imagine a man might
Break his heart if he should come
No more along a stretch of road
To see one solitary gum.

## LEONARD MANN

### 163 *Girls and Soldiers Singing*

Young people in the bus began to sing
Popular songs of this war and the last.
Strange that the sentimental words could wring
My older heart! A bus load in the past
Of such young people I heard sing again
Songs that were hopes of peace and all in vain
Or else these now had not begun to sing.
But loudly yet the girls and soldiers sang.
They had been picking wild heath then in flower
And their full laps were bowers of the spring.
So from harsh Time they plucked the singing hour.
The bus became a mass of song in flight
Down the road's tunnel through the bush at night
While now of love the girls and soldiers sang.

## ERNEST G. MOLL

1900–

### 164 *Foxes Among the Lambs*

Each morning there were lambs with bloody mouth,
Their tongues cut out by foxes. Behind trees,
Where they had sheltered from the rainy South,
They'd rise to run, but fall on wobbly knees.
And knowing, though my heart was sick,
That only death could cure them of their ills,
I'd smash their heads in with a handy stick
And curse the red marauders from the hills.

Each afternoon, safe in a sheltered nook
Behind the smithy, I'd prepare the bait;
And I remember how my fingers shook
With the half-frightened eagerness of hate
Placing the strychnine in the hidden rift
Made with the knife-point in the piece of liver;
And I would pray some fox would take my gift
And eat and feel the pinch and curse the giver.

Each night I'd lie abed sleepless until,
Above the steady patter of the rain,
I'd hear the first sharp yelp below the hill
And listen breathless till it rang again,
Nearer this time; then silence for a minute
While something in me waited for the leap
Of a wild cry with death and terror in it;
And then—it strikes me strange now—I could sleep!

## *165 Eagles Over the Lambing Paddock*

The business of the lambing ewes would make me
At times a trifle sick. The strain and quiver
Of life just squeezed past death to stand and shiver
Wet in the cold on wobbly legs would shake me
With pity for these accidents of lust,
Sometimes with mere disgust.

But I would watch the wedge-tailed eagle wheeling
In skies as biting blue as ocean spaces,
Great wing above the messy commonplaces
Of birth and death and the weak sprawl of feeling;
And coolly then would flow through heart and brain
Respect for life again.

166

## *Pan at Lane Cove*

Scaly with poison, bright with flame,
Great fungi steam beside the gate,
Run tentacles through flagstone cracks,
Or claw beyond, where meditate
Wet poplars on a pitchy lawn.
Some seignior of colonial fame
Has planted here a stone-cut faun
  Whose flute juts like a frozen flame.

O lonely faun, what songs are these
For skies where no Immortals hide?
Why finger in this dour abode
Those Pan-pipes girdled at your side?
Your Gods, and Hellas too, have passed,
Forsaken are the Cyclades,
And surely, faun, you are the last
  To pipe such ancient songs as these.

Yet, blow your stone-lipped flute, and blow
Those red-and-silver pipes of Pan.
Cold stars are bubbling round the moon,
Which, like some golden Indiaman
Disgorged by waterspouts and blown
Through heaven's archipelago,
Drives orange bows by clouds of stone . . .
  Blow, blow your flute, you stone boy, blow!

And, Chiron, pipe your centaurs out,
The night has looped a smoky scarf
Round campanili in the town,
And thrown a cloak about Clontarf.

Now earth is ripe for Pan again,
Barbaric ways and Paynim rout,
And revels of old Samian men.
O Chiron, pipe your centaurs out.

This garden by the dark Lane Cove
Shall spark before thy music dies
With silver sandals; all thy gods
Be conjured from Ionian skies.
Those poplars in a fluting-trice
They'll charm into an olive-grove
And dance a while in Paradise
Like men of fire above Lane Cove.

## 167 *Talbingo*

'Talbingo River'—as one says of bones:
'Captain' or 'Commodore' that smelt gunpowder
In old engagements no one quite believes
Or understands. Talbingo had its blood
As they did, ran with waters huge and clear
Lopping down mountains,
Turning crags to banks.

Now it's a sort of aching valley
Basalt shaggy with scales,
A funnel of tobacco-coloured clay,
Smoulders of puffed earth
And pebbles and shell-bodied flies
And water thickening to stone in pocks.

That's what we're like out here
Beds of dried-up passions.

168

## *To a Friend*

Adam, because on the mind's roads
Your mouth is always in a hurry,
Because you know five hundred odes
And 19 ways to make a curry,

Because you fall in love with words
And whistle beauty forth to kiss them,
And blow the tails from China birds
Whilst I continually miss them,

Because you top my angry best
At billiards, fugues or pulling corks out,
and whisk a fritter from its nest
Before there's time to hand the forks out,

Because you saw the Romans wink,
Because your senses dance to metre,
Because, no matter what I drink,
You'll hold at least another litre,

Because you've got a gipsy's eye
That melts the rage of catamountains,
And metaphors that pass me by
Burst from your lips in lovely fountains,

Because you've bitten the harsh foods
Of Life, grabbed every dish that passes,
And walked amongst the multitudes
Without the curse of looking-glasses,

Because I burn the selfsame flame
No falls of dirty earth may smother,
Oh, in your Abbey of Theleme,
Enlist me as a serving-brother!

169 *Cannibal Street*

'Buy, who'll buy,' the pedlar sings,
'Bones of beggars, loins of kings,
Ribs of murder, haunch of hate,
And Beauty's head on a butcher's plate!'

Hook by hook, on steaming stalls,
The hero hangs, the harlot sprawls;
For Helen's flesh, in such a street,
Is only a kind of dearer meat.

'Buy, who'll buy,' the pedlar begs,
'Angel-wings and lady-legs,
Tender bits and dainty parts—
Buy, who'll buy my skewered hearts?'

Buy, who'll buy? The cleavers fall,
The dead men creak, the live men call,
And I (God save me) bargained there,
Paid my pennies and ate my share.

170 *Sleep*

Do you give yourself to me utterly
Body and no-body, flesh and no-flesh,
Not as a fugitive, blindly or bitterly,
But as a child might, with no other wish?
*Yes, utterly.*

Then I shall bear you down my estuary,
Carry you and ferry you to burial mysteriously,
Take you and receive you,
Consume you, engulf you,
In the huge cave, my belly, lave you
With huger waves continually.

And you shall cling and clamber there
And slumber there, in that dumb chamber,
Beat with my blood's beat, hear my heart move
Blindly in bones that ride above you,
Delve in my flesh, dissolved and bedded,
Through viewless valves embodied so—

Till daylight, the expulsion and awakening,
The riving and the driving forth,
Life with remorseless forceps beckoning—
Pangs and betrayal of harsh birth.

## T. INGLIS MOORE

1901–

### 171 *Refugees*

Pity the men and women who wander homeless
Over the earth, in the harsh canyons of cities,
And down the arid aisles of picture theatres.

These are the refugees from life, flying
From thought's explosions, from haunting persecution
Of the blood's call, from the *Halt!* of arresting spirit.

They have no hearth to light them against the age's
Darkness, no inmost flame of the selfless to comfort
Numbed hearts with faith, to quicken cold hands to endeavour.

Not for them, the poor, the rootless, communion
With Christs and Buddhas, the vistas stretching far from windowed
Symbols, earth-mysteries, signals from smoking horizons.

Not for them, the insensitive, to burn exalted
With annunciation of love like aureoled wattles,
With delight in the mauve-plumed tree on a Gruner morning.

Where is their passion, their laughter? They fled from unbearable
Violins crying, from merry aubades of the magpies,
To the loveless chug of pistons, to Calvinist motors.

They are the robot knob-turners, drowning the footsteps
Of time, their enemy, in blattering waves of trivia;
Afraid of silence, that shows their minds naked.

How shall they deafen brotherhood? Only by keeping
Parrots to screech their oaths of class-torn hatred,
Or to clamour, "Pieces of eight! Doubloons for profit!"

How shall they run from truth? Only by hiding
In opiate illusions, escaping to celluloid shelters,
Ghettos for morons—in the arms of Lamour and Gable.

Grieve for the sunless, the gangs in the mind's black alleys,
Rooters in garbage-cans of gutter-papers,
Swillers of booze, lack-lustre, in gloomy pub-troughs.

Orion, the belted immortal, burns in the heavens;
Death beckons, unseen, from the eyeless Talgai sockets;
Eternity waits—and the refugees strap-hang to Randwick.

## 172 *Benguet Miracles*

Riding an invisible pony in the black night
Through the Benguet mountains, blind on the viewless trail,
I was pierced, in a lightning gash, by a fabulous sight—
Death's rim at my side, and the dragon coiled at the core
Of the abyss, a Grendel flickering in molten mail.

A second miracle broke on the black: my eyes
Were stunned by a Milky Way, a galaxy
Of quivering gold in the valley, fallen from skies
Mysteriously; necromantic till lightning unveiled
A myriad fireflies starring a mango tree.

Mountaineers all, riding the terrors of space
And imperilling time, we turn such encounters, strange
And eruptive, to the will's talismans held to outface
Despair, while undaunted instinct, sure-footed and and calm,
Carries us on to the clear crest of the range.

In the dark of our days, travelling the edge of woe,
I can now dispense with the sun, for I hold in my mind
The molten river and the fireflies dancing, and know
I shall live by the inward lustre of wonders flashed
From solacing beauty, immune to fears of the blind.

173 1905–

## *Cenotaph*

When it was dark in Martin Place,
And when all sound was still,
I thought I saw a ravaged face
Stare blindly up the hill.

I thought I heard a ringing sound
Of hoofbeats in the street,
And from the pavement all around
The stamp of horses' feet.

And, as I stood in reverie,
Surely I heard a cry:
'The Legions of Eternity,
Lord God, are riding by!

'The Legions of Eternity
Are riding down the years
To trumpet to posterity
A tale to tell in tears,

'To tell in unashamed tears
Of triumph over pain,
How young men doffed their cloak of fears
That Man might rise again.

'The enemy we knew was Man,
Yet Man we sought to free.
Lord, now we know our heart's blood ran
For ends we could not see,

'That futile strife to futile gain
Might share with us a grave,
And those who follow not disdain
That which we strove to save.'

BRIAN FITZPATRICK

Lord, it was dark in Martin Place,
  And silence seemed more still.
Surely I saw a ravaged face
  Stare blindly up the hill.

JOHN K. EWERS

174 *The Reaper*

O, the old red reaper
  And the red dust flung,
When the ripe corn's swelling
  In the wheat-heads hung!
O, the old red reaper in the wheat!

The soft wind's calling
  At the close of day,
And my thoughts go winging
  Away, away;
And the rich blood quickens
  With a memory sweet,
O, the old red reaper in the wheat!

The wheels are grinding
  And the canvas sings,
And I leave the city
  On wings, on wings,
For my feet are aching
  On the tar-paved street,
O, the old red reaper in the wheat!

The capeweed's lusty
  And the Roger's high;
But the banks have broken
  And I, and I
May mount no longer
  In the noonday heat
On the rust-red reaper,
On the dust-red reaper,
O, the old red reaper in the wheat!

O, the old red reaper
  And the red dust flung,
When the ripe corn's swelling
  In the wheat-heads hung!
O, the old red reaper in the wheat!

## PAUL HASLUCK

1905–

175 *At Wyndham*

The muddy tide streams up the gulf,
Behind the iron-roof town;
Mangroves, hot marsh, gaunt jetty piles
Are slowly sinking down.

Twice daily, under sun or moon,
Tide masks with watery change
The red threat of eternity
Bared on the stony range.

Out of all time, remote from man,
The Bastion stands alone
And holds no record of the shade
The mounting hawk has thrown.

. . . . .

Here, where the ochreous peeling wall
Or corrugated shack
Hangs by the dry ant-eaten posts
And the foundations crack,

Men in frail chronometric faith
Tick-tocking hours ordain—
Little split pieces of their life
Cut up and grouped again.

Wrist watch of clerk or magistrate;
The painfully turning wheels
Dragged by the drooping donkey team;
The hotel bell for meals;

The sunburnt winchman's clattering speed;
Slow bendulum of bales;
The tally clerk's completed sheet;
The closing time for mails;—

All millimetres on a scale,
Or points on clockface cards,
Or steps of men at cocky sports
Pacing the Hundred Yards

While the grey sandplain spreads beyond
The compass of their stride
And the wide plateau stretches north
Where stockmen never ride.

. . . . .

Twice daily, pulse beats of the sea
Throb in this red-walled vein.
Footprints fade on salt-white marsh
When the tide comes in again.

Come tide or ebb, the glistening shores
The tale of doom yet hear
Where an old native drones his chant
And flakes his crystal spear.

The ancient voice is heard again
Of men who lived with timeless things
And yearly found beyond the range
The constant life-renewing springs.

## 176 *Fancy Dress Ball*

In the electric sun
The dancing has begun;
The band enjoys its happy noise
And syncopated fun.

How like the leaves and grass
These pretty dancers pass.
How like unto a field of poppied corn,
The tumbled rag-bag of a thrifty dame,
Or the rare colour of a Chinese dish.
How like unto the laughing sky of morn,
Wind playing with the gold nasturtium's flame;
The iridescent belly of a fish,
Carpet and sarong spread in hot bazaars,
Or happy cages shrill with budgery-gars.
How like the leaves and grass
These merry dancers pass.

I saw the urgent grass dance in the sun,
Felt the sap creeping in each blade,
And hot desire unfold its flower
On virgin hillsides, sunwashed and afraid;
I felt the root, fumbling in dark for good,

Its hairy finger at the dead man's eyes
And groping downwards to dumb lips,
While life cried out aloud to summer skies
The music for the whirling dance of seed,
The flying thistledown, the crackling pod,
The strife of dying cells, the squandered bloom,
And death becoming birth under the sod.

I saw the sunlight fading in the pine
And the dark shadows grow in length;
I saw the purple bud break on the vine
And the soft tendrils emphasize their strength;
And saw the knotted stump the year bereaves
And the wind busy with the fallen leaves.

In the electric sun
The dancing has begun
And girls in fancy dress,
Tender with happiness,
Are swooning to the moan
Of the autumnal saxophone.
The whirling leaves disclose
The untouched fruit;
Of virgins and the unplucked rose
Demurely sings the flute,
While through the room
The brasses boom
And squeal with joy
Of girl and boy.

Oh, rich bodies warm with life
And eager for love's strife—
There lie the perfect poems yet unwrit,
There dwell the perfect cities men will make,
Dreams and true hands to shape them,
Great courage to bear pain for mankind's sake,
All yet unwakened in the yearning flesh
In panic awe of dread without a name.
Tread easily, tread softly, tread with pride;
Eternity dwells in this narrow frame.

And still the whirling leaves dance on the grass.
The blue smoke drifts and the red agony
Of flame soon disappears. The centuries pass
And scattered seeds complete their destiny.

## JAMES PICOT

1905–1944

### 177 *Main Range*

Peaks in a sea of light! Not moaningly—
As moved eternal oceans fret the sand
Of islands—it surrounds them, but they stand
All bathed in brilliant day, a dazzling sea!
On these more barren slopes, all greenery
Dissolves in light, leaving on either hand
Only hot stones, and the down-tottered band
Of death-white tree-trunks, scarred with ebony.
But otherwhere about the range, hilltops
Hide in a forest, and below, a way
Winds where blown gum-leaves rot in soggy creeks
Lazing through lucerne flowers; till the crops
Of maize it finds, and climbs past these all day
To seek through upward scrubs the topmost peaks.

## IAN MUDIE

1911–

### 178 *This Land*

Give me a harsh land to ring music from,
brown hills, and dust, with dead grass
straw to my bricks.

Give me words that are cutting-harsh
as wattle-bird notes in dusty gums
crying at noon.

Give me a harsh land, a land that
swings, like heart and blood
from heat to mist.

Give me a land that like my heart
scorches its flowers of spring,
then floods upon its summer ardour.

Give me a land where rain
is rain that would beat high heads low.
Where wind howls at the windows
and patters dust on tin roofs
while it hides the summer sun
in a mud-red shirt.

Give my words sun and rain,
desert and heat and mist,
spring flowers, and dead grass,
blue sea and dusty sky,
song-birds and harsh cries,
strength and austerity
that this land has.

## 179 *Australia Day, 1942*

*In Memoriam W. J. Miles*

If ever it were time for the nation's dead to ride
then surely that time is now:
From the Leeuwin's cliffs to the roar of Sydney-side,
from Wyndham to the Howe
call up your ghosts, Australia, call up your many dead,
your Kelly and your Lalor and the shirted men they led;
call up your brave, your Stuart, your Wentworth, your Benelong,
your men who dared Hashemy with its bitter slavish wrong.
Call up your quietened singers from the silence of the grave,
who sang your latent spirit to the complaining wave;
call up your myths and your legends, your men of song and tale,
men from the Snowy, the Centre, and lakes where bunyips wail,
your seekers, finders, fighters, your men who with Clancy ride,
Lawson's men from the western creeks, and a thousand more beside.
Call up your ghosts, Australia, and set them riding far
to rouse a sleeping nation to its seven-pointed star.
Call up your dead, Australians, and bid them ride with you
to set your rivers brimming with Eureka's flood anew.
Call up your hosts, Australia, to strive with you amain
to fight, to sing, to honour your flag of stars again.

Then, when the day is over, whether to shout or to
weep,
keep ever your dead alive in you, oh, never let them
sleep,
for the nation that forgets its dead, that lets its heroes
lie
dust deep in its mind forever is surely ripe to die,
and only those go on, in glory their story to make
who ever keep their dead alive, their songs and heroes
awake.
This is the time for the nation's urgent dead to ride,
so set them riding here and now—
from the Leeuwin's cliffs to the roar of Sydney-side,
from Wyndham to the Howe.

## 180 *Cause for Song*

THERE'S singing in the hills to-night,
With all the stars ashine;
A lad goes whistling homewards.
"Dear land, sear land of mine."

In his heart new heroes ride;
(Hear Clancy's footsteps there?)
Sturt's oars dip in the Murray tide;
Blaxland storms at the Divide;
Through deserts strides the lonely Eyre;
And pioneers are at his side.

He has seen the Southern Cross at last
—Sky gum-trees all aflame.
There's lit within his eyes to-night
A fire no force shall tame.

He has found his own Alcheringa,
And a cult-path for his feet;
Now he marches to a deeper tune
Than alien drums may beat.

The flood of all our rivers
Is running in his veins;
Bone of his bone in every hill
And soil of all our plains.

Deep is his love and deep his rage—
The scars have marked his flesh.
If need should call his fate to test
He'll light Eureka's fires afresh.
Now every day with spear-keen eyes
This vital earth he'll view;
His shall be the enterprise
To write new dream-time on our skies,
To rouse within this folk anew
Such loyalty as never dies.

For this lad who's whistling homewards
With the Southern Cross above
Has found within his heart to-night
A continent to love.

181

## *Tides*

THE moon, that spends her silver on the sea
yet warms it not; that spills its shadowy light
across the land, yet brings no growth
as rises to the sun's belov'd caress;
the ineffectual moon . . . yet hidden strength
drags with its stump-pull tractor
every wave that breaks to fret or fashion
every mile of all our generous coast.

So lies our land, untamed and still unloved,
seeming to mould us not nor fashion
coasts of our minds and melodies,
to leave emotions and our hearts untouched—
but this all truth derides,
for in us, constant and unrecognized,
stir its strong ever-surging tides.

## 182 *New Guinea Campaign*

Are you there, Peter Lalor, are you there,
ghost with gold-dust in your hair;
and lean Stuart do you ride
to seek your northern tide
where in greens they're slowly swinging
through the mud, too tired for singing,
where the poison of New Guinea fills the air?

Are you there, untiring Eyre, are you there,
with your heart beyond compare;
are you there, you brave wild Kellys
where heroes on their bellies
through the jungle now are creeping
—may their women have no weeping—
where snipers from their tree-tops coldly stare?

You ghosts that walk beside
them, do you watch them now with pride
as through green hell and glory
they carry on your story
where in mud their feet are sinking
and in dreams they're always thinking
of their homes and of the cobbers that have died?

## C. B. CHRISTESEN

1912–

### 183 *Thus Winter Comes*

*De ta tige détachée*
*Pauvre feuille desséchée*
*Où vas-tu?*
—*Arnauld.*

Thus winter comes.

All day, knowing you dead,
I have gazed at the golden tree:
Not a day like any day.

And now the brown tide of leaves
Scratches along the gutters,
Piles in corners of the street,
Wind-worried, fretful, dismayed.

I have sat with you in the long hours,
Tried to think of all you said, all you did,
All you might have done;
Suffered with you in your humiliation,
And have seen you turn your eyes
To me and smile in the night,
In the late hour, in the strange
Light beneath the alien stars.

Rise and go, Ulysses, into the Night,
Into the unknown country,
From the land where cordite
And stench of burning dead
Hang heavy among the leafless trees.

Each forehead mark with ashes of the dead;
Scrawl Victory on the raw red earth
For old-time's sake;
Bayonet those dreams that integrated
Foxhole, trench, and roaring desert—
You're homeward bound, Ulysses.

The voice of the wind cries:
*It is finished.*

No shot now echoes agonizing long,
No long unhurried scream
In the loaded night.

Only the leaves, uneasy against
The ruined pylons of the Bridge,
The broken steeple, the insane stare
Of empty windows in the broken street . . .

(To-day they pray for you,
The black-robed ones;
Do they remember how they
Took you not into their house?
Do they remember the polite clerical
Sneer, drinking tea from
Flower-painted cups?

And your bright rosella all aflame
In the glowing poinsettia-tree.)

On your poor dead face
Is etched the map of the modern fate.

Vale, my friend, the years will heal
This hurt, the livid weal
Fade into the furrowed flesh.

And the tired earth will sleep,
Draw close its cool green cloak,
Hide tommy-gun and jeep.

Only the birds on Maggot Beach,
The lap-lap of the tides
Against landing-barge, the rusted sides
Of broken boats, the empty helmet . . . .

(It would seem strange,
After the slaughter and the pain,
The lost years when faith
Curdled in the heart like sour wine,
If the frayed fag-ends of nerves
Still felt the old hurt.)

The air throbs with the beat
Of enormous wings.
Do not cry: *The birds, the birds*
*Have forsaken us!*

(*One* remains, perched on the empty
Helmet, *one* on the obscenely naked palm.)

They have gone high
Into the folkways
Of a forgiving sky.

184

## *Song*

Bird-song twists my heart.

Your voice! There is no peace
In the crystal eye of morning,
The warm noon-day hush,
Among these Eltham hills at evening.

Song of thrush follows, a rush
Of light-in-sound—follows
To the orchard, to vine-clad wall,
Is echoed in the hollows
Where red leaves fall.

* * *

Through the dusk one tall tree
Is bright with stars, suddenly.

185

## *Sea's Edge*

Beauty ran the surf's edge,
O arabesques of melting light!
Beauty, transilluminating
Sea-birds in flight.

Beauty ran where whimbrel ran,
O fragile tracks in summer sun!
Beauty, past imagining,
In the keen eyes of one

Breasting the wind, swift-dipping,
O sea-spray summer bright!
Beauty, on wave-curl tipping,
And the splendour breaking white.

Beauty flew where gull flew,
O weaving wings of summer song!
Beauty, scarce revealing
Sandhills and shadows long.

Beauty blew a farewell kiss,
O ceaseless summer day!
Beauty, shy at evening,
Sailed across the bay.

Beauty fled when light fled,
O love was on the wing!
Beauty, summer flirting,
Promised, forgot the thing!

186

## *If You are as Kind*

You are the moonlight
on jacaranda after rain,
on the silent stream.

You are the white moth
caught in a cage of light
cast by moon and night.

You are the sunrise
on the dreaming plain.
O lose not the dream!

Soft as the fall of mists
is your voice,
cool are your trembling wrists.

You are the springtime,
the song on the apple-bough—

If you are as kind
as your young eyes now,
my heart is confined.

1913–

## 187 *From 'Forgotten People'*

No more the smoke-wisp signal climbs; no more
the boomerang glints, arching, in the sky;
the bush hears not the swinging-stick's low roar,
nor mountain-sides the echoing coo-ee cry.

Things one with a forgotten people these.
Where black men roamed, our towns and cities stand:
disrupted are their tribal mysteries;
wheat, wool and grapes are produce of their land.

How can a stranger tell the way they felt?
At best sincere imaginings are mine.
I find the old bark places where they dwelt,
see stars above an empty bushland shine.

I can but guess their pain, and guess the white
and exquisite laughter of their lost delight.

## 188 *The Noon is on the Cattle-Track*

The noon is on the cattle-track;
the air is void of sound,
except where crows, poised burning-black,
cry to the dusty ground.

Through mulga and mirage go none
but brazen Boolee[1] now,
scorning the mercy of the sun
beneath the niggard bough.

1. Boolee: dust whirlwind.

But suddenly the mulga stirs;
the hot leaves flash like stars;
and, threading song on wing-beat whirrs,
burst flights of gay galahs.

## 189 *Sale-Time*

THERE's dust and loud cracking of whips
On the hot dry plain:
The stockmen are droving the cattle in
To the sales again.

The children will hurry from school,
When their lessons are done,
To clamber about on the stockyard rails
In the glaring sun.

There'll be bidding and buying today;
There'll be hustling and oaths;
And children they worship the strong brown men
In the coarse soiled clothes.

They love to be watching the sight
Of the auctioning
Of bullocks and heifers and calves, and hear
All the bellowing.

They'll be dreaming all during the week
When the sales are over,
Though teacher be speaking of spelling and sums,
Of the bullock-drover.

## 190 *The Exile*

THESE lovely poplars, gleaming in the wild
Australian bushland, have not always smiled.

In the beginning, so a legend goes,
a cynic gloom was on that hedge of rose.

One built from remittance and strong Australian
stone
lived with his servants, very much alone;

hated the hills and river, trees and birds;
bade trusted assignees inspect his herds;

shut out the sturdy rages from his mind;
held sacred dreams of a home that was not kind;

watched foot by foot toward heaven the seasons push
his puny poplar insults to the Bush. . . .

His ghost, in the shadows now, as the long day closes
walks, discontented, by his sneer of roses.

## FLEXMORE HUDSON

1913–

## 191 *Song of an Australian*

I

I HAVE travelled my land, my heart big with pride,
coming on many a township drowsed in the sun,
riding for hundreds of miles through the sheep-clotted
plains
that tremble at noon like the bed of a running stream,
watching with lazy eyes the blue mirage
recede before me through a sunburnt day,
stopping at homesteads that nestle in the gums.

I have crossed our mountains amazed at the hues
of sunset and sunrise on timber-lit slopes,
drawing rein in rapture on many a spur.
I have swum across our creeks and forded them on
horse.
I have seen the almond and the apple picked,
the grape, the cherry, the olive and the mango.
I have watcht the red sun float upon our tropic seas
and set the sails of pearling fleets on fire.
And I have wandered through our coastal cities,
gazing on the people, the traffic and the shops,
gladder to stroke a broken-winded cart-horse
than goggle at ingenious machines.
I know the cities' splendour and their wealth: I know
their slums.
So I have learnt to love the mallee more and the blue
salt-bush,
and the desert, and the little ports where wheat-ships
load at jarrah jetties.

II

I am proud to be Australian and I love
all trees Australian, animals and birds,
all ranges and their rivers, yearn for them
as the stars that reach their hands
to our still lagoons must yearn.

III

I know, Australians, most of you go poor
in the richest land of earth
and I am angry: yet I still exult
you have the courage of our desert trees
that heave green leaves from famisht sands

undauntedly surviving drought
and fire and flood. I love you, I am by
in all your sorrows, feel your setbacks, share
your pioneering pride. I promise I shall ever
sing your land's beauty and the greatness of your soul.

## GINA BALLANTYNE

1919–

192 *Native Land*

(This is my own, my native land)

In careless days now dim
I dreamed her face and spoke her name,
when other minds were busy with alien dreams
and other lips
with many a far land's fame.

Hers the only spirit that I sought,
lured by blue hills or lapped by silken foam,
ever pursuant of a beauty caught
from this my earthly home.

These are the dividends that love has paid me:
courage and strength. And early joy has grown
to exultation that this land has made me
blind to all enchantment but her own.

193 *Daffodils*

Now you are nodding in every well-bred garden;
Worn by the pretty girl in the omnibus;
Sprouting seasonably in all the shop-windows
That yearly create synthetic spring for us.
You have been carefully coaxed to this blooming,
Cotton-woolled out of an unwilling soil—
You the delicate breath of a northern April
Have become the bright reward of southern toil.
But I am fierce for all that 's wildly free
Beyond your sheltered walls: for each half-known
And lightly treasured thing
I keep my worshipping.
Your yellow heads can only make for me
An alien Spring.
Because I know loveliness whose life is vested
In sandstone ridges and bitterness of drought,
Yet blossoms and somehow contrives the ultimate
beauty:
Have walked where tecoma tosses its bells about;
Counted more gold than of your dainty coining,
In butterfly-fashioned flowers massed for flight:
I am impatient of your encroaching faces
And turn to a wilder limitless delight.
For I've seen hardenbergia twine
Its tendrils round the trees, across the track
Its vagrant purple fling
(Soul of all wandering).
How can the same heart worship at your shrine—
O alien Spring?

1919–

## 194 *Train Journey*

Glassed with cold sleep and dazzled by the moon,
out of the confused hammering dark of the train
I looked and saw under the moon's cold sheet
your delicate dry breasts, country that built my heart;

and the small trees on their uncoloured slope
like poetry moved, articulate and sharp
and purposeful under the great dry flight of air,
under the crosswise currents of wind and star.

Clench down your strength, boxtree and ironbark.
Break with your violent root the virgin rock.
Draw from the flying dark its breath of dew
till the unliving come to life in you.

Be over the blind rock a skin of sense;
under the barren height a slender dance.

I woke and saw the dark small trees that burn
suddenly into flowers more lovely than the white
moon.

## 195 *Dust*

This sick dust, spiralling with the wind,
is harsh as grief's taste in our mouths
and has eclipsed the small sun.
The remnant earth turns evil,
the steel-shocked earth has turned against the plough
and runs with wind all day, and all night
sighs in our sleep against the windowpane.

Wind was kinder once, carrying cloud
like a waterbag on his shoulder; sun was kinder,
hardening the good wheat brown as a strong man.
Earth was kinder, suffering fire and plough,
breeding the unaccustomed harvest.
Leaning in our doorway together
watching the birdcloud shadows,
the fleetwing windshadows travel our clean wheat,
we thought ourselves rich already.
We counted the beautiful money
and gave it in our hearts to the child asleep,
who must never break his body
against the plough and the stubborn rock and tree.

But the wind rises; but the earth rises,
running like an evil river; but the sun grows small,
and when we turn to each other, our eyes are dust
and our words dust.
Dust has overtaken our dreams that were
wider and richer than wheat under the sun,
and war's eroding gale scatters our sons
with a million other grains of dust.
O sighing at the blistered door, darkening the evening
star,
the dust accuses. Our dream was the wrong dream,
our strength was the wrong strength.
Weary as we are, we must make a new choice,
a choice more difficult than resignation,
more urgent than our desire of rest at the end of the
day.
We must prepare the land for a difficult sowing,
a long and hazardous growth of a strange bread,
that our sons' sons may harvest and be fed.

196

## *Woman's Song*

O MOVE in me, my darling,
for now the sun must rise;
the sun that shall draw open
the lids upon your eyes.

O wake in me, my darling.
The knife of day is bright
to cut the thread that binds you
within the flesh of night.

Today I lose and find you
whom yet my blood would keep—
would weave and sing around you
the spells and songs of sleep.

None but I shall know you,
as none but I have known;
yet there's a death and a maiden
who wait for you alone:

So move in me, my darling
whose debt I cannot pay.
Pain and the dark must claim you,
and passion and the day.

## JUDITH WRIGHT

### 197 *The Bull*

In the olive darkness of the sally-trees
silently moved the air from night to day.
The summer-grass was thick with honey-daisies
where he, a curled god, a red Jupiter,
heavy with power among his women lay.

But summer's bubble-sound of sweet creek water
dwindles and is silent; the seeding grasses
grow harsh, and wind and frost in the black-sallies
roughen the sleek-haired slopes. Seek him out then,
the angry god betrayed, whose godhead passes,

and down the hillsides drive him from his mob.
What enemy steals his strength—what rival steals
his mastered cows? His thunders powerless,
the red storm of his body shrunk with fear,
runs the great bull, the dogs upon his heels.

## JOHN THOMPSON

### 198 *Refuge*

I hear the clock in the half gloom
chipping the moments from the day,
snicking them leaf by leaf away,
yet mesmerising Time himself
till each particular hour distends
infinitely, and never ends.

This is the learnèd scholar's room,
Here dim millennia, shelf by shelf,
are nicely stacked in decent sleep.

Here this day's deeds of blood and guile,
African massacres or French,
or blitzkrieg on the Soviet State,
scarce push their rumour. Here no stench
of life or death may penetrate
in brash abrupt unclassic style.
Postures may bleed and statues weep
and grim disastrous patterns roll
within this hideout for the soul,
but nothing enters through the door
until its form can change no more.

199

## *Lyric*

The songs of adolescence
which I never wrote
were the most fleeting
glimpses and savours
of wattle and peach blossom,
seashell, feather, and bosom,
and wondrous powers and favours
and ever-imminent meeting.
The songs of adolescence
which I never wrote
were preludes and promises.
Ah, Youth's music is
subtle and swift and sweet
but will not stay in a net
however skilfully set.

## 200 *Chess*

Two Gods devise the scene:
White moves, and Black replies:
a bishop squints malignly at a queen:
a knight theatrically leaps between:
a hopeful pawn plods out and sharply dies:
the stolid castles guard the cowering kings:
two Gods watch all, like hawks on wakeful wings.

Two Gods alone contend:
They fight with mental beams
more keen than flame, more obdurate than rock.
Two wrestling twists of thought-stuff interlock:
two struggling patterns meet, but never blend:
strict thrusting rays now threaten, now defend:
mesh-like ideas make war on lacy dreams.
Meanwhile the troubled puppets on the squares
see not the sole significance which is theirs.

## 201 *When Forty Summers——*

How smoothly I have slid through life
without a crisis or a fear,
true to my workplace and my wife,
like any clerk, for half a year.

I cherish mountains and the sea
no less than when my joy began;
I'm friends with wordless rock and tree
and not averse from wordy Man.

No more, no more, from week to week,
(so mildly my emotions move)
does yawning pit or jagged peak
distort my level graph of love.

No more for trifles do I stray;
No more do hatred, pride, and grief
whistle or blow me every way
as summer gusts a burning leaf.

I've time to tend my growing garden,
time to contemplate my time,
and time enough to fix and harden
half a lifetime's truth in rhyme.

Alas! All this was right and true
till written on a staring page.
Give, give me discontent anew!
Give back my youth, my golden age!

## 202 — *Interruptions*

It was appropriate
that the black blank soot-flat kaa-aak of a crow
chid the languid Sunday,
broke ugly on the gorged siesta heat,
jabbing the great sweet Sunlight where he stood
among the ferns, beans, vines, and beds of herbs
behind the bougainvillea-hidden houses,
under the warm hills, the warm rocks,
the wattles, the waratahs:
for further off, beyond the glass lagoon,
beyond the idle boats and empty dunes,
stupid malignant guns at battle-practice
banged and thudded from a coastal fort.

## 203 *Air Mail — Palestine*

'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,'
The padre said, and row on row
The rustling hymn-books, in the sun
Flickered, were folded. Then as one
A thousand voices stirred the air—
Were silent. Heads were bent in prayer.

Above the padre's voice we heard
An engine drone; then, like a bird
With silvered wings, we saw the plane
Above the sandhills, out to sea,
Heading, with mail, to Galilee.
And in the clouds we saw again
Our homes; the noonday shimmering sun
On farm, and beach, and station run;
The shearers nodding as we pass
Each stand; the silos crammed with wheat
The sheepdogs panting in the heat;
The breakers' curl, the lash of foam,
The aching, taunting thoughts of home.

'Praise God, from whom . . .' and each man bends
His head, to thank his God, who sends
Half way across the world, the mail:
Who deems those engines shall not fail,
But that they bring across the sea
The mail, to His own Galilee.

## INTRODUCTION TO NEW ZEALAND SECTION

In this necessarily restricted space I have tried to make a representative collection of New Zealand verse from the earliest times. So far as is possible, I have aimed at showing the development of that verse as an item in our history. With a few exceptions, the order is chronological. Dates, however, should be regarded critically. Professor Arnold Wall, for example, was born in 1869, and came to New Zealand in 1898, but is still writing, and ranks as a 'modern'. The first poem in the collection is an ancient Maori chant, and I follow this with 'Emigravit', by Mary Colborne-Veel, because it illustrates the nostalgia of the English colonist in the earlier period. Later there is a Maori lament, composed for a modern occasion. I have included these Maori songs for the following reasons. The Maori is the original New Zealander, and is a natural poet with a large heritage of poetical myth, legend and story. He enjoys political equality with the European, and intermarriage has been common. His leaders agree that fusion with the European is inevitable. Maori culture is thus the heritage of New Zealand generally, and to an increasing extent it must influence national art in its various forms.

I have also selected with an eye to variety of subject; hence the inclusion of station verse. My regret is twofold: that I have been obliged to omit certain poets, and that I have not been able to give as much of others as I would like. The long poem has

presented a particularly difficult problem. I could not omit Dr. J. C. Beaglehole's noble poem on Bach, but its length has restricted me in illustrating his lyrical gift. Similarly the length of 'Robin Hyde's' 'Journey from New Zealand' has narrowed the representation of her shorter poems.

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ALAN MULGAN

*Wellington*

## 204 *The Chant of Hautu*

A tohunga (or priest) tries to lift a spell placed on his young daughter by a rival.*

(*Translated by James Cowan, 1870-1943*)

O PARE, my daughter,
Cease your long slumber,
Rise from your mat-bed,
Come forth to the morning.
Lay your hand to the paddle,
The great blade, the long blade,
Matahourua's paddle.
The dawn-light is breaking,
Soon the sun will be leaping
Above the dark mountains.
Come forth, O my daughter,
The canoe's at the lakeside;
Set your hand to the baler,
Dash out the water—
The tide of Hawaiki.

No more that sad moping,
That gloomy heart-sickness,
Despair by the fireside;
Bend your ear to the morning,
Voice of Tane, the Tree-God,

*A widely known folk-song of the Urewera country, often used in modern times as a lullaby.

The birds of the forest
All chanting together,
The song of the bush-edge,
The song of the summer;
  Listen gladly, my daughter.

Slide back the carved tatau,
The door of the whare,
Gaze out on the morning;
The dawn-light is spreading,
The bush is awakened,
The Sun-God flames upward—
  Tama-nui-te-ra!

To your weaving, my daughter;
Place upright the turuturu,
The sticks for mat-weaving,
For the robe fine and flaxen.
Set your heart on your pattern,
The art of your mother,
Your karakia murmur,
Skill-implanting taumaha;
Pass your threads deftly,
Shape the tapering garment
  That soon will be finished.

Snared bird of the forest,
For the Atua's appeasement,
Will be laid on the bush-shrine,
Tahuna-a-Tapu;
Sacrificial that offering,
Lest wizard spells harm you.
Let no hurt now befall you:

Curse-spells of makutu,
Charm-fires of magician,
Ahi ruhi, ahi ngenge,
Limb-withering matiti—
At nought we shall set them,
They are powerless to harm you;
  Rise and live, O my daughter.

## MARY COLBORNE-VEEL

205

### *Emigravit*

1862–1923

Mountain lilies shine
  Far up against the snow,
And the ratas twine
  On wooded slopes below.
Rata and clematis
  Sweet as bush may hold;
While honey-loving wild birds kiss
  The kowhai's cups of gold.
Dear and fair shall all of these
  Henceforth to children be:
But ah! my childhood's flowers
  Are far away from me.

    In an English lane,
      Where the primrose patches blow,
    And the sweet spring rain
      Hangs jewels high and low.

Homely flowers set
  Where our farmsteads rise,
Make an England yet
  Under sunny southern skies.

Lilac scent is blown
With wattle on the breeze;
September bids the leaves grow broad
On happy English trees;
And apple-orchards smile again
In sweet familiar show—
But my heart is mourning
For the scenes of long ago.

When the reeds grew high
And the cowslips in the grass;
And my young love and I
Saw the springtime pass.

Homely blossoms grow
In our graveyard near the sea,
Where my love lies low,
With a place beside for me.
Pansy blooms and pinks;
The columbine's quaint bell;
Rosemary for remembrance
(Pray, love, remember well!);
But ah! my happy ghost must walk,
If happy ghosts may be,
In an English lane or meadow
With wild flowers growing free.

In an English lane,
Where the primrose patches blow,
And the sweet spring rain
Hangs jewels high and low.

## 206 *A Winter Daybreak*

From the dark gorge, where burns the morning star,
I hear the glacier river rattling on
And sweeping o'er his ice-ploughed shingle-bar,
While wood-owls shout in sombre unison,
And fluttering southern dancers glide and go;
And black swan's airy trumpets wildly, sweetly blow.

The cock crows in the windy winter morn,
Then must I rise and fling the curtain by.
All dark! But for a strip of fiery sky
Behind the ragged mountains, peaked and torn.
One planet glitters in the icy cold,
Poised like a hawk above the frozen peaks;
And bends the cypress, shuddering, to his fold,
While every timber, every casement creaks.
But still the skylarks sing aloud and bold;
The wooded hills arise; the white cascade
Shakes with wild laughter all the silent shadowy glade.

Now from the shuttered East a silvery bar
Shines through the mist, and shows the mild day-star.
The storm-wrapped peaks start out and fade again,
And rosy vapours skirt the pastoral plain;
The garden paths with hoary rime are wet;
And sweetly breathes the winter violet;
The jonquil half unfolds her ivory cup,
With clouds of gold-eyed daisies waking up.

Pleasant it is to turn and see the fire
Dance on the hearth, as he would never tire;
The home-baked loaf, the Indian bean's perfume,
Fill with their homely cheer the panelled room.
Come, crazy storm! and thou, wild glittering hail,
Rave o'er the roof and wave your icy veil;
Shout in our ears, and take your madcap way!
I laugh at storms! for Roderick comes to-day.

## WILLIAM PEMBER REEVES

1857–1932

### 207 *The Passing of the Forest*

**A Lament for the Children of Tané**

All glory cannot vanish from the hills.
Their strength remains, their stature of command
O'er shadowy valleys that cool twilight fills
For wanderers weary in a faded land;
Refreshed when rain-clouds swell a thousand rills,
Ancient of days in green old age they stand,
Though lost the beauty that became Man's prey
When from their flanks he stripped the woods away.

But thin their vesture now—the trembling grass
Shivering and yielding as the breeze goes by,
Catching quick gleams and scudding shades that pass
As running seas reflect a windy sky.
A kinglier garb their forest raiment was
From crown to feet that clothed them royally,
Shielding the secrets of their streams from day
Ere the deep, sheltering woods were hewn away,

Well may these brooding, mutilated kings,
  Stripped of the robes that ages weaved, discrowned,
Draw down the clouds with soft-enfolding wings
  And white, aerial fleece to wrap them round,
To hide the scars that every season brings,
  The fire's black smirch, the landslip's gaping
    wound,
Well may they shroud their heads in mantle grey
Since from their brows the leaves were plucked away!

Gone is the forest's labyrinth of life,
  Its clambering, thrusting, clasping, throttling race,
Creeper with creeper, bush with bush at strife,
  Struggling in silence for a breathing space;
Below, a realm with tangled rankness rife,
  Aloft, tree columns in victorious grace.
Gone the dumb hosts in warfare dim; none stay;
Dense brake and stately trunk have passed away.

Gone are those gentle forest-haunting things,
  Eaters of honey, honey-sweet in song.
The tui and the bell-bird—he who rings
  That brief, rich music we would fain prolong,
Gone the woodpigeon's sudden whirr of wings,
  The daring robin all unused to wrong,
Ay, all the friendly friendless creatures. They
Lived with their trees and died and passed away.

Gone are the flowers. The kowhai like ripe corn,
  The frail convolvulus, a day-dream white,
And dim-hued passion-flowers for shadows born,
  Wan orchids strange as ghosts of tropic night;

The blood-red rata strangling trees forlorn
  Or with exultant scarlet fiery bright
Painting the sombre gorges, and that fay
The starry clematis are all away!

Lost is the resinous, sharp scent of pines,
  Of wood fresh cut, clean-smelling for the hearth,
Of smoke from burning logs in wavering lines
  Softening the air with blue, of brown, damp earth
And dead trunks fallen among coiling vines,
  Slow-mouldering, moss-coated. Round the girth
Of the green land the wind brought vale and bay
Fragrance far-borne now faded all away.

Lost is the sense of noiseless sweet escape
  From dust of stony plain, from sun and gale,
When the feet tread where quiet shadows drape
  Dark stems with peace beneath a kindly veil.
No more the pleasant rustlings stir each shape,
  Creeping with whisperings that rise and fail
Through glimmering lace-work lit by chequered play
Of light that danced on moss now burned away.

Gone are the forest tracks where oft we rode
  Under the silvery fern fronds, climbing slow
Through long green tunnels, while hot noontide
    glowed
  And glittered on the tree-tops far below.
There in the stillness of the mountain road
  We just could hear the valley river flow
With dreamy murmur through the slumbering day
Lulling the dark-browed woods now passed away.

Fanned by the dry, faint air that lightly blew
We watched the shining gulfs in noonday sleep
Quivering between tall cliffs that taller grew
Above the unseen torrent calling deep,
Till like a sword cleaving the foliage through
The waterfall flashed foaming down the steep,
White, living water, cooling with its spray
Fresh plumes of curling fern now scorched away.

The axe bites deep. The rushing fire streams bright;
Swift, beautiful and fierce it speeds for Man,
Nature's rough-handed foeman, keen to smite
And mar the loveliness of ages. Scan
The blackened forest ruined in a night,
The sylvan Parthenon that God will plan
But builds not twice. Ah, bitter price to pay
For Man's dominion—beauty swept away!

## HUBERT CHURCH

1857–1932

208

### *Rosalind*

Rosalind has come to town!
All the street's a meadow,
Balconies are beeches brown
With a drowsy shadow,
And the long-drawn window-panes
Are the foliage of her lanes.

Rosalind about me brings
Sunny brooks that quiver
Unto palpitating wings
Ere they kiss the river,
And her eyes are trusting birds
That do nestle without words.

## HUBERT CHURCH

Rosalind! to me you bear
  Memories of a meeting
When the love-star smote the air
  With a pulse's beating:
Does your Spirit love to pace
In the temple of that place?

Rosalind! be thou the fane
  For my soul's uprising,
Where my heart may reach again
  Thoughts of heaven's devising:
Be the solace self-bestowed
In the shrine of Love's abode!

## JESSIE MACKAY

1864–1938

209 *The Gray Company*

O the gray, gray company
  Of the pallid dawn!
O the ghostly faces,
  Ashen-like and drawn!
The Lord's lone sentinels
  Dotted down the years—
The little gray company
  Before the pioneers!

Dreaming of Utopias
  Ere the time was ripe,
They awoke to scorning,
  The dungeon and the stripe.
Dreaming of millenniums
  In a world of wars,
They awoke to shudder
  At a flaming Mars.

Never was a Luther
  But a Huss was first,
A fountain unregarded
  In the primal thirst.
Never was a Newton
  Crowned and honoured well,
But first a lone Galileo
  Wasted in a cell.

In each other's faces
  Looked the pioneers—
Drank the wine of courage
  All their battle years.
For their weary sowing
  Through the world wide,
Green they saw the harvest
  Ere the day they died.

But the gray, gray company
  Stood every man alone
In the chilly dawnlight:
  Scarcely had they known
Ere the day they perished
  That their beacon-star
Was not glint of marshlight
  In the shadows far.

The brave white witnesses
  To the truth within
Took the dart of folly,
  Took the jeer of sin.

Crying, 'Follow, follow,
  Back to Eden-gate!'
They trod the Polar desert—
  Met the desert fate.

Be laurel to the victor,
  And roses to the fair,
And asphodel Elysian
  Let the hero wear:
But lay the maiden lilies
  Upon their narrow biers—
The lone gray company
  Before the pioneers!

## 210 *Spring Fires*

The running rings of fire on the Canterbury hills,
  Running, ringing, dying at the border of the snow!
Mad, young, seeking, as a young thing wills,
  The ever, ever-living, ever-buried Long Ago!

The soft running fire on the Canterbury hills,
  Swinging low the censer of a tender heathenesse
To the dim Earth goddesses that quicken all the thrills,
  When the heart's wine of August is dripping from the press!

The quiet bloom of haze on the Canterbury hills!
  The fire, it is the moth that is winging to the snow,
Oh, pure red moth, but the sweet white kills:
  And we thrill again to watch you, but we know, but we know!

The long yellow spurs on the Canterbury hills
To a moon of maiden promise waken once in all the year,
When the fires come again and the little tui trills,
And who will name or think on a January sere?

The lone, large flower of the Canterbury hills
On the slender ti-tree will hang her honeyed head
When the moon of fire has called her to the spurs and the rills,
Dim and strong and typical of tintless river-bed.

The scent of burning tussock on the Canterbury hills,
The richness and the mystery that waken like a lyre
With the dearness of a dreaming that never yet fulfils!—
And we know it, and we know it, but we love the moon of fire!

## 211 *The Carol of Kossovo*

(*Christmas, 1915*)

It is the Eve of Christ the King
(One God, one grave at Kossovo!)—
The living tongue it cannot sing;
The living foot it cannot go.
Lord, if Thou wilt have carolling,
Cry up, cry up the dead to sing,
And make a temple of the snow,
And a choir of the winds at Kossovo!

Thy little Son had a manger bed
(Sing low, sing loud at Kossovo!)—
But ours were bedded in the sleet,
With neither fire nor winding sheet.

Clave Heaven over Mary's head,
The gentle kine about her feet;
But Hell came up to our overthrow,
Mothers and men at Kossovo!

Twice has Serbia died her death
(What shall we offer at Kossovo?)—
A full five hundred years ago,
A yestere'en in the cruel snow!
Bread and wine and life and breath
Are not in Serbia more, but lo!
The red wine dripped into the snow
From Serbia's heart at Kossovo.

And we were grounden for Thy wheat.
(The mills of the Pit at Kossovo!)
Dead carollers, come we to Thy feet,
O little Christ of the long ago!
Dead and done with earth, we trow;—
Good Christian men, but ye were slow!
Now quicker to our burying go,
Who hear the carol of Kossovo!

## DAVID McKEE WRIGHT

1867–1928

### 212 *In the Moonlight*

The moon is bright, and the winds are laid, and the river is roaring by;
Orion swings, with his belted lights low down in the western sky;
North and south from the mountain gorge to the heart of the silver plain
There's many an eye will see no sleep till the east grows bright again;

There's many a hand will toil to-night, from the centre down to the sea;
And I'm far from the men I used to know—and my love is far from me.

Where the broad flood eddies the dredge is moored to the beach of shingle white,
And the straining cable whips the stream in a spray of silver light;
The groaning buckets bear their load, and the engine throbs away,
And the wash pours red on the turning screen that knows not night or day;
For there's many an ounce of gold to save, from the gorge to the shining sea—
And there's many a league of the bare brown hills between my love and me.

Where the lines of gorse are parched and dry, and the sheaves are small and thin,
The engine beats and the combine sings to the drays that are leading in,
For they're thrashing out of the stook to-night, and the plain is as bright as day,
And the fork-tines flash as the sheaves are turned on the frame of the one-horse dray;
For many a hand will toil to-night, from the mountains down to the sea;
But I'm far from the lips of the girl I love, and the heart that beats for me.

The trappers are out on the hills to-night, and the sickly lantern-shine
Is mocking the gleam of the silver moon in the scrub on the long trap-line;
The tallies are big on the rock-strewn spur, and the rattling clink of the chain
Comes weirdly mixed from the moon-bright hill with the whistling shriek of pain;
For many a hand will toil to-night where the tussocks are waving free;
But it's over the hills and over the plain to the heart that beats for me.

The stars are bright, and the night is still, and the river is singing by,
And many a face is upward turned to gaze at the moon's bright eye.
North and south, from the forest deeps to the heart of the silver plain,
There's many an eye will see no sleep till the east grows bright again;
There's many a hand will toil to-night by shining land and sea.
O moonlight, bear my message of love to the heart that beats for me.

1869–

## 213 *The City from the Hills*

THERE lies our city folded in the mist,
Like a great meadow in an early morn
Flinging her spears of grass up through white films,
Each with its thousand thousand-tinted globes.

Above us such an air as poets dream,
The clean and vast wing-winnowed clime of Heaven.

Each of her streets is closed with shining Alps,
Like Heaven at the end of long plain lives.

## 214 *Grey Warbler*

Where did he learn it—
  That cadence low and long,
The sweet semi-toned sibilance sadly descending
  Like a folk-song?

From the wind he learned it
  Whispering and sighing
Through leafy mazes in swaying bough and spray,
  With a fall dying.

One made them both,
  The breeze and the bird;
Before there were men on the earth to each other they
    sang it,
  And nobody heard.

## 215 *End of the Albatross*

Balancing, swinging, swaying, poising and gliding,
Up the long currents invisible easily sliding,
Down the long currents invisible smoothly descending,
How can the beautiful creature come to his ending?

Nowhere in air or in sea can a foe assail him;
How, in that air and that sea, can his strength ever fail him?
How can his eyes grow dim or his wings ever falter?
How can disease find him out in that waste of water?

The ice-born, sleet-slinging Southerly brings him no terror;
How can his lead be at fault or his compass in error?
Sailing before the dark storm what floe can check him?
No loud lee-shore, nor reef, nor rock can wreck him?

His gossips from birth are the gales and the spume flying,
And the sea roaring up at the berg and the berg replying;
Wheeling and poising, balancing, poising and swaying,
Ceaselessly, ceaselessly on, ceaselessly straying.

His end must come with a mere cessation of motion—
A long and slow volplane to the levels of ocean,
A closing of eyes and a folding of wings together,
And a blending, snow to snow, of the foam and the feather.

216

## *The Cinema*

Over your head
The rigid, pure, persistent ray
Pierces the darkness like a blade,
Wherein is no thing seen
Save that the dust-motes in their millions
Eddy and play
In carols and cotillions,
Until it breaks upon the screen,
And then
Appear the shapes of driving clouds
And desperate men,
Sailors in the shrouds
Of labouring ships,
Sails shaking,
Seas breaking,
Men and the sea at grips;
The empty, lifeless band of light
On unimaginable waves
Carries the terrors of the stormy night,
Dragged from their graves,
And makes to live again
The struggling men
In your sight.
Just so our earth,
With all its striving and its stresses,
Its tears,
Its mirth,
Its loves and hates,
Riven souls, relentless fates,
Cities proud and haunted wildernesses,

Is not, as men have guessed,
Some god's uneasy dream,
Or elfish jest,
But just the interruption of a beam.

## 217 *Death and the Spider*

Let us forgive her her greed,
Her guile and her lust of blood;
For in spite of it all, we know her contriver and maker
Is wise and good.

'She taketh hold with her hands,'
Said Solomon of old,
'She is in kings' palaces,' and in Jules Fabre's garden
The tale is told:

Of her wit and her tact,
Her crafts, judgment and skill,
Her spinnerets ceaselessly spouting her varying silks
At her sweet will;

Of her threads solid or hollow
Fine and light in extreme,
Made by machines in her own big body without hands
Or oil or steam;

Of her spokes and her spiral,
Her quick unwasteful motion,
Her patience and foresight, her traps and shrewd stabs,
And her deep devotion;

Of her spiritual youth,
Her chariots launched on the air,
Her nurseries fur-lined and firm and made lovely
with colours
Subtle and rare;

Of her vigils long and lone,
  Her fasts beyond belief;
Her contempt of love, her gentle and gracious ending,
  Without pain or grief.

Well, when the time comes,
  Whatever others think, I,
If I am to meet Him who made her so cleverly, shall never
  Fear to die.

## 218 *Bushed*

'Look in yourself,' says the seer,
'Watch, probe, and peer,
And you may find
Deep down, hidden behind
The clinging folds of habit, far below
The threshold of the life of every day,
Some faint gleam of a light of long ago,
Some lingering ray
Out of that haunted twilight, strange and wild,
Which man, in mazes lost,
Peopled with god and ghost,
When he was yet a child.'

To me the knowledge came unsought,
Sudden and swift as thought,
Flinging my broken soul from bliss
Into a black abyss.
Down from the grassy heights
Dropping through forests old and green,

I saw the sloping lights
Slide in tremulous pools
Over the moss-grown boles,
And all the savage scene
Washed in a radiance dim and muted;
Deep in the thick a blackbird fluted,
Filling the golden afternoon
With his love-laden tune,
And all was peace, and calm, and friendliness.

Then from the narrow track
Heedless I wandered, far astray,
Madly sought here, sought there,
Through the fast-waning day,
Up, down, forward and back,
In ever deepening despair;
Loneliness, slow starvation, loomed
Over me, lost, bushed, doomed.

Ah, then I found
What evil soul, what evil mood,
Our fathers sensed in heath and wood—
The lurking menace and the hate
In things inanimate,
A foe in every cloud, and rock, and tree,
And the whole frame of nature leagued and bound
Against poor man, in sullen enmity.

## 219 *Gathering Peaches*

FATHER is out to his tea, and I've stolen an hour at last
To come and gather the whare* peaches, that fall in the wind so fast:
—The wild little whare peaches, that pucker your mouth so sore,
By the whare that won't be the whare ever to me any more!

. . . This was the place that he lived in. In he came, at this door,
Touch'd you, like this . . . O happy window! . . . and wall . . . and floor!
Here, he must have stood, often: he will have sat, like this . . .
And his head will have lain—O pillow! 'tisn't yourself I kiss.

. . . Just the newspaper-pictures, pasted up on the wall;
Stretcher, and old camp-oven, and ricketty stool—that's all!
. . . Cold: silent: and empty . . . But, hasn't he left it clean?—
Even the whare's better, Phil, for being where you have been.

A poor little place; but you lived here—here you sat at your ease,
Shut the door and were private, with only yourself to please,

*In 'whare' the 'e' is sounded.

King, and alone: as in my heart you were king and alone.
But . . . the whare and I weren't wanted; and our only owner's gone.

Philip, why did you leave us? Philip! Philip! O
Philip! If it could all go back, even to a week ago—
When, with you at the shed still, the worst hadn't all come true!
When you hadn't gone to better yourself—and my best hadn't gone with you!

Nothing to blame you for—Oh, no, *no*! from beginning to end,
You were only easy, and kind—and a bit my friend.
Maybe you're promised to some one, at Home there, over the sea . . . .
. . . Kiss nor promise between us, and yet—I am not free!

Oh, I can't help it! I can't care whether it's wrong or right!—
Thinking of you I wake each morning, and fall asleep each night.
There's no comfort and no sense in being a hypocrite—
You didn't love me, but I love you! And I'm proud of myself for it!

Gone! and for good . . . . Why not, pray? Youth and courage, and push,
Where was his chance, stagnating here with with us in the Bush?
No—you were born for battle, boy! I wouldn't have had you bide.
I wouldn't stint you of glory, nor yet myself of pride!

O you faces of famous men, his hands hung here on the wall,
Only a shepherd was he? Ay, but mate to you all!
Go! Yes, rise to your own height, Philip—high as ever you can—
But if you never get on one inch, I shall have loved a Man!

Straight: spirited: clean: look'd up at women, and down on lies:
Cool, at a hurry: stuck to things: and took command with his eyes . . . .
Here! let's get to the peaches—they'll bottle and serve, in time;
But, what can you do with an unsunn'd love, and a hope pluck'd ere its prime?

Do? Well, anyway, bottle 'em up! Whether for future food,
Who's to know? But it may be so,—for it's got to do me good!
It's just not going to cripple or break me—it shan't! it's to make me strong;
For it 'ud be wronging you, Phil, to let it do me a wrong.

Wrong? What, Philip? That fixt my heart, and tuned my whole life right?
Cripple me? Break? My Philip? that brought the sun into sight?
Vigorous always, and helpful, and full of resolute hope—
Would I make *you* a reason to grumble and pine and mope?

Not I! You'll never know it, or care to, Philip—but all the same,
Because you're plucky, because you're you, *I'll* be plucky and play the game.
It's tough; ay! and it will be tough, but, even at the start, it pays—
Haven't I got the thought of you for company all my days?

And everything in the width of this world that's brave and honest and true,
Don't I love it dearer than ever, Philip, through loving you?
And, maybe 'tisn't the love one gets, so much as the love one gives,
That settles whether one's something or nothing, whether one loafs or lives?

... Finish'd!—Look at the sunset, flaming there on the peak!
And the falling leaves are shining and pretty, and so is the singing creek—
For I'm not to go lumping through the world, with my head all bow'd and bent,
No! but properly taking notice—that is the way *he* went.

... Washing, mending, and cleaning: cooking the porridge and chops—
Thank God that the work is plenty, and heavy, and never stops!
Dad and the boys to work for, and always God above—
Only ... it's awfully lonely, Philip ... my love! my love ....

Oh, no, no, I mustn't. I've got to live my life,
Haven't I? I've to be myself, even if I'm not your wife.
But God in His mercy seal my heart, and keep it loyal and stout,
To hold the love of you there for ever—never to let you out!

The blue is pass'd to purple, and there's the full moon come.
The boys 'll be finish'd milking, and it's high time I was home.
Well! the peaches are all in, now; there's two crops in to-day:
One that'll last the winter; one for ever and aye!

## ARTHUR H. ADAMS

1872–1936

### 220 *Written in Australia*

The wide sun stares without a cloud:
Whipped by his glances truculent,
The earth lies quivering and cowed!
My heart is hot with discontent—
I hate this haggard continent.

*But over the loping leagues of sea*
*A lone land calls to her children free;*
*My own land holding her arms to me*
*Over the loping leagues of sea.*

The old grey city is dumb with heat;
No breeze comes leaping, naked, rude,
Adown the narrow high-walled street;
Upon the night thick perfumes brood:
The evening oozes lassitude.

But o'er the edges of my town,
Swept in a tide that ne'er abates,
The riotous breezes tumble down;
My heart looks home, looks home, where waits
The Windy City of the Straits!

The land lies desolate and stripped;
Across its waste has thinly strayed
A tattered host of eucalypt,
From whose gaunt uniform is made
A ragged penury of shade.

But o'er my isles the forest drew
A mantle thick—save where a peak
Shows his grim teeth a-snarl—and through
The filtered coolness creek and creek,
Tangled in ferns, in whispers speak.

And there the placid great lakes are,
And brimming rivers proudly force
Their ice-cold tides. Here, like a scar,
Dry-lipped, a withered watercourse
Crawls from a long-forgotten source.

My glance, home-gazing, scarce discerns
This listless girl, in whose dark hair
A starry-red hibiscus burns;
Her pallid cheeks are like a pair
Of nuns—they are so fragile-fair;

And like a sin her warm lips flame
  In her wan face; swift passions brim
In her brown eyes, and ebb with shame;
  Her form is sinuous and slim—
  That lyric line of breast and limb!

But one there waits whose brown face glows,
  Whose cheeks with Winter's kisses smart—
The flushing petals of a rose!
  Of earth and sun she is a part;
  Her brow is Greek and Greek her heart.

At love she laughs a faint disdain;
  Her heart no weakly one to charm;
Robust and fragrant as the rain,
  The dark bush soothed her with his balm,
  The mountains gave her of their calm.

Her fresh young figure, lithe and tall,
  Her twilight eyes, her brow benign,
She is the peerless queen of all—
  The maid, the country, that I shrine
  In this far banished heart of mine!

*But over the loping leagues of green*
*A lone land waits with a hope serene—*
*My own land calls like a prisoner queen—*
*But oh! the long loping leagues between!*

## 221 *Bond Street (London)*

Its glittering emptiness it brings—
This little lane of useless things.
Here peering envy arm in arm
With ennui takes her saunterings.

Here fretful boredom, to appease
The nagging of her long disease,
Comes day by day to dapple in
This foaming sea of fripperies.

The languid women driven through
Their wearied lives, and in their view,
Patient about the bakers' shops,
The languid children, two and two!

The champing horses standing still,
Whose veins with life's impatience thrill;
And—dead beside the carriage door—
The footman, masked and immobile!

And bloated pugs—those epicures
Of darkened boudoirs . . . and of sewers—
Lolling high on their cushioned thrones
Blink feebly on their dainty wooers!

And in the blossoming window-shows
Each month another summer glows;
They pay the price of human souls
To rear one rich and sickly rose.

And a suave carven god of jade,
By some enthralled old Asian made,
With that thin scorn upon his lips,
Waits, in a window-front displayed:

The hurrying, streaming crowd he sees.
With the same smile he watches these
As from his temple-dusk he saw
The passing of the centuries!

## 'EVELYN HAYES' (URSULA BETHELL)

1874–1945

### 222 *Levavi Oculos*

The delicate lines of the hills of this country,
Rain-swept and sun-tanned, naked to the four winds,
Console our tired eyes as the high-lineaged kine do,
With their fine-chiselled flanks in a near field reclined,
Bring solace, calm as the quiet hills are,
Composed of the same lineaments in one design.

These tussocked hills have the texture of paduasoy,
Seen afar off, or a venerable mere* smoothed
And soft-surfaced by immemorial friction;
Or of brown-leathered, road-worn shoes;
Or of shrine steps, foot-rounded by pilgrims,
Or a dun-wooded, kiss-saluted rood.

Wish not for these again their cloak and vesture,
The rich and dark array, fire-burned and axe-felled
By foreign tribes, (even ours, ours, the invaders),
But hail these clean lines, with him who first beheld
The divine form revealed of a young lissom goddess,
Poised, zephyr-sped, on brim of voyaging shell.

* "Mere," a stone or jade weapon, has two syllables.

## 'EVELYN HAYES' (URSULA BETHELL)

These lines, at night-fall, melting into the arable,
  Enclosing wine-tawny and grape-violet shades,
Affect us as a faint air might, played upon a virginal,
  So long ago that all pain it held then is allayed;
Or clarinet, so far distant it brings us but a memory
  Of healed lament, in the dim twilight, dying away.

These hills at dawn are of an austere architecture,
  Claustral; like a grave assembly, night-cold
    numbed,
Of nuns, singing matins and lauds in perpetuity,
  While the sluggard multitude without is dumb;
But at sunrise carmined, gilded; as of rare cosmetics
  A girl takes, for more beauty now, lest her lover
    come.

But at mid-day, the bare hills have a remote wildness,
  Like a young colt or filly, unrestrained
And running lithely, never having known bit nor
    bridle,
  Or lying down quiet, knowing nor spur nor rein . . .
How often, on dusty plain pent, have I lifted up mine
    eyes there,
  And found freedom, and found mind-liberty again!

## 223 *By Burke's Pass*

Nature, earth's angel, man's antagonist,
The stern antagonist from whom he wrests his bread,
Long heretofore with vast magnificence
Did carve this scene, prepare the arena, spread
Bronze tussocked terraces before precipitous
Great purple alps, loose glacier-shed,
Fierce-laughing streams in circuitous riverbed.

Lo, man to the assault! In part victorious
His petty trophies sets he up to amend
The natural scene. The corn-stacks aureate,
Wearing their weights like amulets, the autumn blend
Of orange-spattered poplars, with the various
Gilt willows are his signet. Now, vainglorious,
He calls the expanse a home and awful Nature, friend.

The austere angel smiles on man's predicament,
Forgoes awhile advantage, and abates his blows;
Soft mien assumes of kindly ministrant;
As on this ending day in genial radiance glows
The whole amphitheatre, stark antinomy
Of wild and won annulled; and, new-companioned foes,
Beneath the hostile heights homestead and farm repose.

Homestead? Nay, halting-place, accommodation
Achieved. . . . Did not that sombre regimented band
Of firs, those gravestones, publish man's condition?
For night, parental night, shall soon with gentle hand
Suspend her folding arras, resume domination;
Nature, to rest dismissed by a most high command,
Shortly roll up this planetary decoration,
Man having passed darkly onwards to an unknown land.

## 224 *October Morning*

'ALL clear, all clear, all clear!' after the storm in the morning
The birds sing; all clear the rain-scoured firmament,
All clear the still blue horizontal sea;
And what, all white again? all white the long line of the mountains
And clear on sky's sheer blue intensity.

Gale raved night-long, but all clear, now, in the sunlight
And sharp, earth-scented air, a fair new day.
The jade and emerald squares of far-spread cultivated
All clear, and powdered foot-hills, snow-fed waterway,
And every black pattern of plantation made near;
All clear, the city set—but oh for taught interpreter,
To translate the quality, the excellence, for initiate seer
To tell the essence of this hallowed clarity,
Reveal the secret meaning of the symbol: 'clear'.

225 *Time*

'ESTABLISHED' is a good word, much used in garden books,
'The plant, when established . . . .'
Oh, become established quickly, quickly, garden!
For I am fugitive, I am very fugitive—

Those that come after me will gather these roses,
And watch, as I do now, the white wistaria
Burst, in the sunshine, from its pale green sheath.

Planned. Planted. Established. Then neglected,
Till at last the loiterer by the gate will wonder
At the old, old cottage, the old wooden cottage,
And say 'One might build here, the view is glorious;
This must have been a pretty garden once.'

## ALAN MULGAN

1881–

226 *Above the Town*

MY love and I went up the hill
And drank the gorse for wine;
The tented sky was rich and still,
The world was hers and mine.

Below, the many-coloured town
Curved in its strength about the bay;
The far hills wore their silken gown;
A hyacinth field the harbour lay.

In slow enchanted idleness
She plucked a leaf and smoothed its fold;
A grass-stalk felt her light caress
And strewed the path with gold.

I saw her stand and dim the sun;
The hills bowed down in worship meet;
I saw the golden acres run
To lay their cloths before her feet.

The faint breeze faltered on the fir
And died upon the altar stair;
Infinity stooped down to stir
The still, deep wonder of her hair.

And who was I that I should kiss
Her whom the very air enthroned?
Yet up I drew myself to bliss,
Condemned but well condoned.

For not alone I dared to climb,
To touch the heaven of her lips;
The crowded loveliness of time
Pressed to acclaim its own eclipse.

The timeless moment brought to rest
The tumbled tides of death and birth;
And then with sudden simple jest
She dropped us back to sweeter earth.

When hearts are slow and hearths are warm
And we sit nodding by the blaze,
Too old to challenge shine or storm
With vigour of departed days,

We shall remember, like a face
Clear in the swirl of perished hours,
The simple glory of that place—
The hills, the sea, the untilled flowers,

And in our quiet hearts rejoice
  That youth comes ever pressing on
To catch from wonder's crystal voice
  The message of eternal song,

And standing time-free on the height,
  Drinks up the gorse and breasts the sun,
And in its own created light
  Builds love's unmoved pavilion,

And girded there by ancient things,
  Beauty and faith, a running flame,
Cries to the old world's questionings,
  'Childe Roland to the *bright* tower came!'

## 227 *Success*

Through the cold hall they carry the shining coffin;
Past the icy statuary, the stiff palms and the pictures,
Bloodless this spring afternoon as the body within the rimu;
Down the broad steps on to the concrete pathway,
Bordered by convict-cropped grass and grenadier shrubs at attention.
The dry-eyed dry-stalked daughters watch from the verandah;
Their mourning garments are easy for them who have never known joy.
The sons walk behind the coffin, fifty-ish, indeterminate,
Showing the outlines but not the strength of the rough-shod old man they follow.

Out in the street where the birches swim in the lovely
depths of the sunshine,
And the wind blows softly from the azure bowl of the
sky,
The cars stretch sleek and fat like over-fed show
beasts,
Their bellying bodies shining; and grouped irregu-
larly round them
Business heads of the city, those who fought with the
dead man,
And those who with wintry welcome took their share
of his profits;
And knots of his clerks, sapped, it would seem, a little,
By long years spent in the drouth of dry-crushing
ledgers,
Talking in whispers and fanning a flicker of proper
regret.

Away moves the line in decorous haste, purring with
power well-leashed;
Sprightly almost is its rendezvous with death.
Through the wide suburban streets it curves, past
gardens and hoardings,
The old home drowsing in pines, and the pert little
bungalow,
All eyebrows and eyes;

The soundless foam of the cherry above the straight
green crest of the hedge;
The mint of the gardened kowhai, royal but lonely,
dropping its gold on the grass;
Clusters of dusty shops, broken fences, a fester of
petrol pumps;

Passers-by who pay their homage of custom—
Boys in hurrying lorries, an Indian hawking for bottles,
Women leaning on doors and old men licking the sunshine;
They take their look at the passing, like a moment's glance at a news-reel;
'What a long one!' they murmur, and turn to their habit of living.
And edging the blue horizon, the deeper blue of the ranges,
Rimming this saucer of earth with its ant-like procession of death.

As the cars float along hushed and discreet are the voices.
No stories; talk of the dead man, his rise and his gains.
What will the boys make of the business? Ah, they haven't his shrewdness—
Nice fellows, but weak and short-sighted; the clever father, you know,
And the old saw's repeated. Where will the money go?
Speculation and hope; and in the front are the boys,
Correct, Laodicean, within them release at war with their duty.
'I am free, I am free,' the soft wheels murmur their surging
But death in his trappings is visible there before them,
And the old man's power and contempt still burden the air.

'Man that is born of a woman,' the plangent committal, impartial,
Raises this vanquished brother to the vast republic of death;
He is one with emperor and saint in the tradeless night of the ages.
A silence, and then the coffin passes from sight,
And the old money-breeder goes to the clean fire of the hero.

The cars move off with a rush, released from the traffic limit of death,
Each for itself; interiors blue with smoke but lighter with gossip;
With every turn of the wheels the dead is a fainter memory;
And the boys pay smaller heed to their conscience.
'I am free, I am free, I am free,' and plans fly round in their heads—
Spending and power and prestige, a lordly place in the city.
They do not know that use is a habit not now to be broken;
Through the coming years they cannot straighten the will that is bent.
The old man is dead, but the old man will live, their master;
They will run here and there in the mould that he made,
Never guiding the plough or loving the furrow.

Under the wide clear sky, with a cleansing wind for an acolyte,

They scatter the ashes and a spot of earth is richer.
Up from the calcium, the iron, the phosphate, there
will spring, perchance, a tea-tree,
In its bridal simplicity lovelier than even its fellows.
This will be sweeter than any act of his living.

## SEAFORTH MACKENZIE

1883–

### 228 *A Leaf from a Fly-book*

The king's road is a troublous summons calling day
and day;
But my feet take the cocksfoot track—the easy
vagrant way;
Beside the restless acres and the gold of noisy gorse,
The ripple lures its lover down the dazzle of its course.

Its speech is of the willow-reaches rich with lurking
joy;
The revel of the rapids where gay life is death's
decoy;
My heart is with the laughing lips; I follow up and
down;
But follow not the king's white road toward the haste
of town.

Afoot, the wash of waders, and aloft, the haze-veiled
blue,—
The heart it needeth nothing so the cast fall clean and
true.
O carol of the running reel, O flash of mottled back!
And who will take the king's white road, and who the
cocksfoot track?

The hour-glass fills with weather like a wine of slow
content;
I throw the world behind me as a cartridge that is
spent.
Then home by summer starlight bear my grass-cool,
mottled load;
I quit the pleasant cocksfoot track; I take the king's
white road.

## 'KATHERINE MANSFIELD' (KATHLEEN BEAUCHAMP)

1888–1923

### 229 *To God the Father*

To the little, pitiful God I make my prayer,
The God with the long grey beard
And flowing robe fastened with a hempen girdle
Who sits nodding and muttering on the all-too-big
throne of Heaven.
What a long, long time, dear God, since you set the
stars in their places,
Girded the earth with the sea, and invented the day
and night.
And longer the time since you looked through the blue
window of Heaven
To see your children at play in a garden . . .
Now we are all stronger than you and wiser and more
arrogant,
In swift procession we pass you by.
'Who is that marionette nodding and muttering
On the all-too-big throne of Heaven?
Come down from your place, Grey Beard,
We have had enough of your play-acting!'
It is centuries since I believed in you,

But to-day my need of you has come back.
I want no rose-coloured future,
No books of learning, no protestations and denials—
I am sick of this ugly scramble,
I am tired of being pulled about—
O God, I want to sit on your knees
On the all-too-big throne of Heaven,
And fall asleep with my hands tangled in your grey beard.

## 230 *To L.H.B. (1894-1915)*

Last night for the first time since you were dead
I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.
We were at home again beside the stream
Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.
'Don't touch them: they are poisonous,' I said.
But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam
Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head
And as you stooped I saw the berries gleam.
'Don't you remember? We called them Dead Man's Bread!'
I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar
Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.
Where—where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?
By the remembered stream my brother stands
Waiting for me with berries in his hands . . .
'These are my body. Sister, take and eat.'

1889–

## 231 *Change to Snow*

Overnight the hills became
Enemies, hooded, tall
With a new authority, bleak
From the conspiratorial midnight, having shed
The green of amity and drawn
The hostile cape over the contours of kindness.

Our sleep, mattressed upon content,
Dreams not of change, not of a revelation
That, sheering up like a wave,
Makes of the idol's court a desolation.

We, waking, expect to find
The amiable architecture, the clear event:
Not the craftsman, to-morrow, and the unsparing line.

What shall we do with our piled opinions
When, facing another day,
We see that change has made a sloven
Of beauty we have proven?

Is it better to watch, see light grow less,
See time make up the face that drifted
Through dreams, the face that was
Each day's redemptive rose? Shall we refuse
No rigors of recasting, laugh to lose?

This snow is the face of change whose frown
Invalidates the morning hope, wears down
The private boast, reduces to a refugee
The feted certainty.

Therefore, waking,
Expect the morning treachery, the defaced images,
The passing bell.
For life marches with change, the infidel—
Life links not with any man's desire,
Life that is hammer and fire.

## 232 *Death in the Air*

All the bells were ringing and all the prides
Thundered, life went singing
To the sultry climax, the roaring pinnacle.

His ears were not filled with the whistling angers,
But with the clang of crusade, the inexorable finger
Steering him to the crest of peril.

Often had he gone
Through the cold street, his will at ebb,
The hounds in the blood quiescent,
His star no extravagant sun,
But the starveling crescent.

Yet did not death attack
The diminished heart, the hollow defence,
Met him not on the mean earth,
But all the bells were ringing, life
Was plumed and pursuing, life
Laughed on the wave of its meridian
Till the last height shone with fate,
And from the cloud's innocence
The white face slid, death from the false glory.

## 233 *Mrs. Carmichael*

Mrs. Carmichael, as mild as a mouse,
Lives in a hollow in a little lost house:
The world goes on, and cares not a whit
That Mrs. Carmichael has a part in it—
The world goes on, and knows not nor cares
That Mrs. Carmichael is putting up prayers,
And working all day and into the night
To keep things white, to keep things white.

She limps to the well in the windlestraw—
From the well she has every drop to draw.
She washes and scrubs, and cannot stop
Till doorstep is fair as table-top:
Her eyes are sharp and her back is bowed
To keep her hearth as the summer cloud:
Her linen 'neath her hands' caress
Is wooed to lily loveliness—
For Mrs. Carmichael one thing is right,
To keep things white, to keep things white.

. . . . . .

But Mrs. Carmichael has gone, for death
Came softly for her as a summer breath.
The stars look down on a cottage broken,
Of a love withdrawn the crumbling token . . .
The feckless cows go in at the doors,
And the birds bring quarrels to the drabbled floors,
And unclean things and litters crowd
The hearth that was white as the summer cloud . . .
And the world goes by, but never will know
That the little lost house where the great cows go
Held a hearth and a heart that shone as the snow.

## 234 *Rangiora*

The land has no antiquity
(Said the little voice in my head).
After all it has no history . . .
(No history, it said.)

I was riding along by Rangiora,
And considering how through endless blue August days
I had ridden from village to village
In the holy land of England;
And every fold in the ground,
And every turn in the road
Was full of remembrances and histories.
And that is why the voice said, No history.
No history, it said.

But what is history?
So I looked at the sacred fields of harvest
Consecrated by the labour of man and the blessing of heaven,
And strove to see their story.

And I saw the swamp and the bush of long ago
And the wild brown marsh birds flying to and fro,
The bittern and the heron, and the owl,
And all the clutter of screaming river-fowl,
As man rides into the silent sanctuaries
And pools of the wood, paddling his own canoe,
To build his hut, and plant the kumara,
And little wild children playing in the trees.

So the Maori heads the procession
That consecrates this land with labour and blood.
Then come the white men with the axe and gun,
And the birds are killed, and the trees lie low in the sun,
And the ground is cleared and stubbed and burned and drained;
And each descending day
Is another chapter in history,
And another acre gained.

And the long march goes on:
They come with harrow and plough: with pick and spade they come,
No music with their march, no bugle and no drum,
No colours swinging high, no clapping, and no cry,
No ribbons and streamers gay.
They march through glory of sunny summer days,
Through streams of pouring rain,
Through frosts that bind the plain.
With horse and dog they ride uneven ways;
By pain they attain,
And labour and agony.

This is the high procession that I saw
(And would love to draw)
Wind round the paddocks by the gorse fence edge,
Blessing the boundary hedge,
And consecrating it with sweat and blood.
Who made that poplar grove?
And drew those lines of oaks
That stiffly hide the little house of wood,
Whose hearthfire dimly smokes
A cloudy blue?

I crept up, too,
And peeped in at the window that I might see
What lovely mystery
Was planted there,
Worth so much agony
And guarded with such care.
And there I saw a mother mild,
And in her lap a little child,
With the loveliness that Mary wore
In the stable of Bethlehem.
And this most lowly mystery
Is the end of every history
That every man shall come to adore
In the stable of Bethlehem.

## WALTER D'ARCY CRESSWELL

1896–

### 235 *Leaving New Zealand*

I took my hat, I took my gun,
I left the red woods in the sun.
I left the streams that ran with me
Through happy years from hill to sea.

My shadow led me down the track,
The mountain madly called me back,
Where, white as washing hung to dry,
The snow lay up along the sky.

They sang me all the loves I knew,
The lazing sun, the lakes of blue,
The billy boiling at the sky,
But never one remembered I.

For I had read the hand of night
That wrote a thing for my delight,
And not the birches' purple haze
Could hold me to the river-ways.

Not Beauty in the bluest skies
Could hold me with her mountain eyes,
When in the stars I read my goal,
The stars that summon to the soul.

When in the stars I staked my claim
To sluice the shining peaks of Fame,
And seized my gun and seized my hat
And galloped down the tussock flat,

It seemed as though I could forget
The bending grasses, blowing yet,
That carry up from hill to hill
The reinless winds that ride them still.

I spurred, as tugged my bridle rein
The beauty of the brown, flat plain,
As leant above me from the skies
The memory of my mother's eyes.

The city train at Timaru
Sped north with me, as arrow-true
As youth that sights a shining goal;
And free as water flew my soul.

Ah, willowed city at whose knee
I learnt the urge of all things free,
That bids the sandward rollers run
To spread their foam before the sun;

That brought the men who gave you birth
To carve their dreams in nameless earth,
To fence in furrows dark with rain
The wildness we have snared and slain;

And tame and soften to their wills
Your tiger-brood of tawny hills;
The urge that sends the sap in spring,
The light of stars and love's sweet sting;

Ah, mother-land, could I depart
From all that had enslaved my heart,
The bare, bright snow, the woods of green,
The glitter of the sea between,

It was that I would make of them
A banner in the eyes of men,
And far the legend of your name
Would peddle in the marts of Fame;

That I would ride as Beauty's knight
Proud flaunting in the lists of Light
The feather of your foeless seas,
Their lance of thunder on your leas.

And can I win a laurel crown,
Above the green of forest gown,
Above the white of breathing snow,
I live that you should wear it so.

For that it was I took my gun
And left the red woods in the sun,
To sluice the hills that haunt my dreams,
In hunger for the grain that gleams.

1899–

## 236 *Timber Mill*

The long hushed Night now rolls the starry curtain
into the wings of Dawn. Time waits uncertain
how Light's pale hand, with long, slow easy motions
shall sweep the string of Earth; to Day's devotions
invite the flutes and drums and splendidly
engage all sound in one vast Symphony.

Awake, O virgin ear,
the chords break slowly clear
from music stabbing through the mind's new
hemisphere . . .

Overtones of singing birds,
violins in high content;
undertones of sleepy words,
basso buffo, uncontent.

Door banging,
iron clanging,
wind plecking zither leaves,
vines tapping timbrel eaves,
feet crunching ice and frost,
clock striking twice, then lost

in wailing and crying
of water in trouble
with boulder and rubble;
in Gypsy winds flying
whose fingers bestir
the ghost of a lute and an old
dulcimer
faintly replying . . .

Hush!
O'er swish and slash of restless flax
intones the rhythmic beating axe,
beats the thud on thud unholy
borne on winds of melancholy,
Thud . . . . . Thud
Tree's blood . . . . Thud
Thud.

(And within the kowhai tree
loud the tuis peal above it,
peal as though their hearts approve it
matin bells of melody).

Cowbells in the creaking bush,
hooves homing in through slush
splash . . . sog . . . splash and sog.
'Bail up . . . blast that dog.'

Peal, O feathered innocence,
Wave, O green indifference.

Hark!
An althorn loudly sounding
flying to the hills, rebounding
over bush and plain and river
on and on and on for ever.
Now a hundred tones dilating,
like a quickened drum vibrating,
lose the quietude of waiting,
lift their mouths and concentrate
round this canto-voice of Fate.

Listen, listen, to the answer,
the responding in the answer.

First a hesitating . . . Chug . . .
then an intermittent . . . Chug . . . Chug
then a regulated . . . Chug . . . Chug . . . Chug . . .
Chug . . .
Lo, the drum beats of the Mill
flood the deafened stage until,
hill on hill re-echoing,
earth and sky all cease to sing
and flute and clarinet and string
die in this cacophoning;

and Nature's nerves embrace the shock
of shouting voices, hissing steam,
of flapping belts and rattling beam,
of rolling trolley, creaking block,
of tearing timber's rasping scream,
of boards articulating . . . Whock.

Toll, O feathered innocence,
Grieve, O green indifference.

Far away the motif changes:
distant in the mountain ranges,
cables straining from the winches
striving with the groaning inches;
savage teeth in cunning clinches
biting flesh that never flinches;
steam and iron fighting timber
through the fern fronds to the limber.

And with cursing voice and thought,
sinewed heart in labour caught,
grapples jacks and muscles taut,
Beauty's manacles are wrought.

Grumbling wheels on wooden rails
stumbling hooves with iron nails
mourn the rape of Tane's daughters
ravished fern and muddied waters,
rumble crumble eerily
mutter stutter drearily
droning in a threnody
for the mighty matai tree.

And the sighing leaves who listen
sob those perfect tears that glisten
where the sunlight, dripping through
the rough torn lace of green and blue,
is building river lake and shore
of light along the forest floor.

Fly, O feathered innocence,
Die, O green indifference.

Clanking chains;
flicking reins;
snorting beasts;
sweating chests;
wither and rump
set to the bump
slither and slump
to the creek.

Halt! Men speak:
'What the hell . . .
Let 'em spell . . .
fixed them hames . . .
Hold up James . . .
Damn the rain . . . .'

On again,
strain . . . strain . . . strain . . .

Brooding silence in the bush,
silence that is like the hush
of stone Cathedrals when the choir
is gone and altar lights expire . . .

Quiet. Deathly. Then the call
of oboes, pure, Celestial . . .
Birds! The Birds! From flesh and ghost
the Ambrosian Chant! O Heavenly host!

Running wheels on iron rails
plodding hooves with iron nails
screeching brakes and switching tails
levered spike; and never fails
might of steel and might of oath
to bed the thousands years of growth.

(Solemn as a ruru calling,
precious as a taro sowing,
certain as the uto's falling
were those quiet years of growing).

Now the Mill beside the river
like a cracked and dusty 'cello
maddened by a crazed old fellow
sets the anguished air aquiver.

Shriek on shriek the whirring saws
higher shriek . . . then sudden pause;
dripping with the sap they drank,
humming free from dust and dank
teeth that growled as deep they gnawed
grin and hum a merry bawd
o'er the fallen forest lord.

(And within the miro tree
sad the tuis toll above it,
toll as though their hearts reprove it,
vesper bells of witchery).

Soft the saws hum low and even
and a star appears in heaven;
now the symphony is ending
and the toilers, apprehending
one long final note of Fate,
wiping brows in sweating hate,
listen for that note insate.

Listen . . . and that blast astounding
angered hills is hurled rebounding
into shattered echoes harsh as
bittern cries in raupo marshes.

Peace, O ravished ear,
soft music drawing near
brings peace unto the mind's new hemisphere.

Night is closing o'er the fretting
of the Day in sweet forgetting

undertones of sleepy birds,
violins in low lament;
overtones of weary words,
tubas sombre, deep, content.

## 237 *The Name*

We make that lovely sighing sound
A thing too far away,
A word and not the little name
His mother used to say.

Why do we never think of her
As standing at the gate,
A dim, blue patience in the dusk?
'Jesus, come home; it's late.'

Or in a dust of silver drops
When eaves are crying eyes,
'Jesus, the rain has made you grow,
You soon will touch the skies.'

## 238 *The Bushfeller*

Lord, mind your trees to-day!
My man is out there clearing.
God send the chips fly safe.
My heart is always fearing.

And let the axehead hold!
My dreams are all of felling.
He earns our bread far back.
And then there is no telling.

If he came home at nights,
We'd know, but it is only—
We might not even hear—
A man could lie there lonely.

God, let the trunks fall clear,
He did not choose his calling;
He's young and full of life—
A tree is heavy, falling.

## 239 *A New Zealand Christmas*

What a grace upon it that He chose that country—
We have kind oxen and our straw is sweet.
We have shepherds too now and stables and a manger.
Had we but one imprint of His little feet!

For my heart goes crying through these days of summer,
Through the sleepy summer, slow with streams and bees,
Had my land been old then there He might have lighted,
Here have seen His first moon in the ngaio trees.

And my heart goes crying through these days of waiting
While His lilies open and His tuis sing,
Had my Lord been born here angels might have ringed us,
Standing round our islands, wing wide to wing.

Had my Lord been born here in the time of rata
Three dark-eyed chieftains would have knelt to Him
With greenstone and mats and the proud huia feather,
And the eyes of Mary watching would grow dim.

The sky would be a tumble of summer constellations,
Our own, alas, hidden, that cluster of loss,
Exiled from sight by some great thoughtful angel,
Lest He too soon should look upon a cross.

Oh my heart goes crying through these days of
waiting,
We too have oxen and our straw is sweet,
We too have shepherds and stables and a manger.
Oh for one clear footprint of His little feet!

## 240 *The Bankrupt*

She bought no ware without the coin.
By robbing Peter she paid Paul,
Went without coal to give an alms
And took no gifts at all.

If someone came and, being short,
She borrowed milk, or flour,
She would be back with twice as much,
Almost within the hour.

And, by some instinct for the right,
She always paid in kind,
Gave work for work and time for time.
Her honesty was blind.

When, at the last, she had a child,
The neighbours sat and cried.
They whispered that she was too old,
And that was why she died.

I think the hugeness of the debt
Took breath and life away.
She would not count her pains enough,
Not half enough to pay.

## 241 *The Legend of the Cuckoo*

Young Christ went groaning up to Quarantana,
With His tall head flung up against the sky.
Spring cried to Him from every bush and bramble.
He passed her blindly by.

Oh, every tree was given up to blossom,
And every bee burred in the broken lane,
But as He passed, the little bees and blossoms
Were still with love and pain.

And every bird bent sideways in its sorrow,
And whispered softly to Him as He went,
'My brightness, are you black and lost in anguish,
My sweetness, are you spent?'

Yea, every bird except the careless Cuckoo,
That, working on, in flurry and in fret,
Hollowed a nest, and cried its own name over,
Nor saw His eyes were wet.

Young Christ came smiling down from Quarantana,
He blessed each bird along the broken lane,
And said, 'My little pity, it is over.
My gladness, sing again.'

And then He turned and looked upon the Cuckoo.
It gave one cry and flew off to the west.
Since then it may not cease its haunted flying,
Nor ever build a nest.

## 242 *And at the End*

Once on a dewy morning
With the bright sky blowing apart,
Each bud broke on my eyelids,
Each bird flew through my heart.
I prayed for the faith of a starling
Under the tawny trees,
A child or a holy woman—
What could be greater than these?

But now on a heavy morning
With the dull sky blowing apart,
When no flower blesses my eyelids,
And no wing brushes my heart,
I, made surer by sorrow,
Beg what seems more to me,
The faith of a willow in winter,
Or a blind hound nosing the knee.

243

## *A Night in Spring*

1875–

The high, white windy stars
Their naked beams flash through
The boughs of budding orchard trees.
The wind has dried the dew,

And with its wide soft sweep
Makes sounds along the grass,
As if one with a trailing gown
Deliberately did pass.

No summer sweetness yet,
No showers of lavish bloom,
But from the swelling bark and buds
A ghostly faint perfume.

It is the season's youth,
Austerely pure and fair;
A hint of splendours yet to be
Comes with the wandering air.

The soul of my young love
Is like this clear spring night,
As high and starry as the skies,
As coldly sweet and bright.

Ah! would she walked with me,
In the windy stir of air,
The sweet grass underneath her feet,
And stars caught in her hair.

Our hands would clasp and cling,
As 'neath the boughs we passed,
And the love that almost breaks my heart
Would waken hers at last.

1901–

## 244 *Considerations on Certain Music of J. S. Bach*

*To N. M. Richmond*

I

Meditating in silence after the last note
I consider old John Sebastian
cantor and capellmeister, official writer
of Leipzig anthems, player in court bands,
chief of the sons of God, by his music divine
in his own right beyond the Lutheran God.
He was twice married, had eighteen children . . .
he was
twice married, had eighteen children; mark that
my soul: the genius philoprogenitive,
historical instance for once; was, too,
a model of conjugal stability; prayed
piously; quarrelled with his churchwardens;
taught Latin. Colossal!—and lived to sixty-five,
producing and teaching all those small Bachs—
must have lost count of children and anthems alike!
Regularity did it; punctual
to the Sunday Bach with his anthems; punctual
I suppose with his offspring: man must work,
his days are numbered, the old cantor must produce.
And his works were good—his Wilhelm Friedemann,
young Johann Christian and the rest, good musicians,
and his anthems that outlasted them all.

So I consider in front of the clavier
old John Sebastian tempered so well,
playing his forty-eight preludes and fugues, sublime
manifesto: more final than that later one
of communist Marx. The fugue that I played—
it closed on a cadence like the hours of his life,
when the old man lay dictating that last
choral-prelude, last elaboration of faith
and dying humbleness before his God.
*Wenn wir in hochsten Nothen sein*—troubled those
words
but how transfigured, in trust glorified.
And yet consider that annoyed fierce cantor's face
of his portrait, the just indignation
of a virtuous man affronted with a false note,
with a choir attacking at a wrong angle
some Sanctus or Kyrie; John Sebastian,
master, I much prefer your Forty-eight;
your face for the excellent Leipzig musicians—
out of strength sweetness: give me the honey! . . .
That prelude flowed like a spring of consolation
in a hard southern land; come, my fingers,
over the page, forget the multiplied children,
that severe Leipzig physiognomy,
court bands, conjugal stability and Latin;
to it again—to the tenderness, sad
beauty, to the firm exquisite line, the lovely
pulsation and triumph of order: turn,
this next is John Sebastian himself, cantor,
his soul and mind; then to our fifth French Suite.

II

Growth, growth:
this is how a tree grows, stretching
roots in the stony earth, plunging
deep in dark subterranean
universe, branching and clutching
all to itself, building itself
down from a seed a central core;
with simultaneous stretching,
branching, moving, up to the light,
to the light straining, exulting,
putting on leafage, growing green
with living bark, perfect in flower,
sprung from the seed the central core
itself symmetrical logic
premised implicit deduction.
But the tree fails, it withers, it
goes down to the dust whence it came
rotting again to mould; the stones
know other plungings, the light
quivers about the unfolding
of new petals in perfectness.
But this fugue does not fail; it endures
while life flourishes and withers,
it endures while the stones crumble
endlessly crumbling; endlessly
steadfast it endures, perfection
of the grown branch, the tree,
striking its roots in the dry mind's
stony places, bringing the rain
to the stony places, ever
enduring, ever the flower

perfect, the seed the central core
premised and grown symmetrical
enduring.

III

*Gigue*

Like sunlight on water
woven in pattern
over and under
in quick intermingling
like sunlight on water
in ripple of brightness
under and over
in alternate sparkle
it moves back and forth
it dances with lucid
and gracious quick-footing
like sunlight on water
threading below
to deeps of clear vision
patterned in brightness
the flow of the water
the rhythm of light
joined in a measure
of ceaseless quick-footing
forward and backward
weaving and woven
like sunlight on water
patterned: with steady
caesura recurring
and pausing: but tripping
in delicate motion

on on and ever
on intermingling
quick-footed lucid
over and under
like sunlight on water
woven in pattern.

IV

*J. S. B. Loquitur*

*Vor deinen Thron tret' ich*

I, Johann Sebastian Bach, musician,
cantor of Saint Thomas' School in Leipzig,
being near my end praise God for his mercies;
for although I am blind so I was not
always, for the Lord gave me great power
among all men to sing unto his greatness:
witness my works which I leave behind me.
For I strove long in anguish of spirit,
with my soul I battled long with the Lord's
angels, knowing it was to his glory.
Though I was in darkness yet I saw him.
Though I am in darkness yet I see him.
In music I saw him, I walked with him
before the gates of Paradise, the smooth
and glowing pearl, they fled apart, I walked
within and heard the music of his courts
echoing, twining before him in divine
subtle-ordered canon. In my striving
with his angels too I heard songs of Zion;
these I have sung; with deep notes of organ
and organ's sweetness I have adored him,
with choir and strings and trumpets I have praised
him greatly, and with tenderness of oboe
mourned for him. All men know me and no man;

for I went alone before him, and strove
alone. Now Lord take me for I am blind,
I am blind yet the eyes of my spirit
see; the ears of my spirit hear the songs
of Zion no man else heard; now take me Lord,
Bach, cantor of Thomas' School, at my end.

v

The great gates swing; their Lord shall enter in.
Slowly, quietly, as to receive a miracle
perceptible by mass inanimate,
by wood, and iron, they open, seem to listen
and pause in shadow waiting for the light.
There is the silence of early dawn, or midnight's
hush, when the gates of the uttermost sky
swing smoothly, and the crowded hosts glitter in
pomp
standing with bowed heads round their hidden joy.
For the Lord comes, the Lord comes; no wing or
crying
of seraphim has moved the waiting air;
nor have the Lord's people expectant in gladness
come yet, for he sends no rapt messenger
in quick excitement to announce his arrival:
but the gates know and they lift up their heads,
and they are lifted up, the everlasting doors.
Now the air knows, the quiet is disturbed
with a new rhythm, with a heavenly logic
troubled, a divine fore-runner is here—
like a bright note of music, or a point of light,
spreading in ripples, merging with its fellows,
merging and following like a rush of music
like a cloud of light come the fore-runners.

The gates, the everlasting doors lift up their heads;
now seraphim sweep on and all the powers,
dominions throng, and cherubim in escort stand.
The gates are listening and they know the Lord.
He comes with swiftness invisible in silence,
with a heard silence in the midst of music;
with a sound of wings beating and voices crying
bursting like spray about the pillared doors,
with the flash of great pinions phalanxed in order,
with majesty with peace with splendour vestured
with echoing trumpets, with an inmost silence,
through the swung gates, the silent listeners
rejoicing in shadow retired, through the still gates
their Lord, their Lord shall enter in.

## 245 *In the Cotswolds*

Yes, it is beautiful, this old, old land:
These houses root their being in the earth,
These walls, these stones, share in a larger birth
With strong-set trees and painted blades that stand
About the slopes, the russet furrows, and
Join in the deep impulse that through the girth
Of hill and valley's limit, moulds its worth—
So meet for love, to hold within the hand!

I tread these roads, and know once more the race
Of blood, the tissue's balance with the bones;
A wind strikes—and my opened eyes are blind
With gazing on an unseen distant place;
My deaf ears hear Orongo-rongo's stones—
Bloom bursts on wind-swept hills within my mind.

J. C. BEAGLEHOLE

## 246 *La Fille Aux Cheveux de Lin*

(*Tres calme et doucement expressif*)

CALM, calm were you when I saw you, my love,
as you walked, and your eyes were expressive
with a sweet seriousness, a gay silence:
I knew then that your young heart was not passive.

And your flaxen hair combed back from your forehead
bewitched me like the sound of music playing,
a song in a remote beautiful language
or tune from fingers to deft keys applying.

Calm you passed like a murmur of wonderment—
Stay! I would have cried, Do not go, so given
for delight; but I spoke not, in wonder
that my mind could be with beauty so graven.

A. R. D. FAIRBURN

1904–

## 247 *In the Younger Land*

THIS stubborn beach, whereon are tossed
white roses from the sea's green bough,
has never sheathed a Norman prow
nor flinched beneath a Roman host;

yet in my bones I feel the stir
of ancient wrongs and vanished woes,
and through my troubled spirit goes
the shadow of an old despair.

248 *An Old Woman*

The years have stolen
all her loveliness,
her days are fallen
in the long wet grass
like petals shaken
from the lilac's bosom
when the winds have broken
her tangled blossom.

Her youth like a dim
cathedral lies
under the seas
of her life's long dream,
yet she hears still
in her heart, sometimes,
the far sweet chimes
of a sunken bell.

249 *Elements*

I

In the summer we rode in the clay country,
the road before us trembling in the heat
and on the warm wind the scent of tea-tree,
grey and wind-bitten in winter, odorous under
summer noon,
with spurts of dust under the hoofs
and a crackle of gorse on the wayside farms.
At dusk the sun fell down in violet hills
and evening came and we turned our horses
homeward through dewy air.

In autumn, kindness of earth, covering life,
mirrored stillness,
peace of mind, and time to think;
good fishing, and burdened orchards. Winter come,
headlands loomed in mist,
hills were hailswept, flowers were few;
and when we rode on the mountains in frosty weather
the distant ranges ran like blue veins through the land.
In spring we thrust our way through the bush,
through the ferns in the deep shadow angled with sunbeams,
roamed by streams in the bush, by the scarred stones
and the smooth stones water-worn, our shoulders wet
with rain from the shaken leaves.

O lovely time! when bliss was taken
as the bird takes nectar from the flower.
Happy the sunlit hour, the frost and the heat.
Hearts poised at a star's height
moved in a cloudless world
like gulls afloat above islands.

Smoke out of Europe, death blown
on the wind, and a cloak of darkness for the spirit.

II

Land of mountains and running water
rocks and flowers
and the leafy evergreen, O natal earth,
the atoms of your children
are bonded to you for ever:
though the images of your beauty lie in shadow,
time nor treachery, nor the regnant evil,

shall efface from the hearts of your children
from their eyes and from their finger-tips
the remembrance of good.
Treading your hills, drinking your waters,
touching your greenness, they are content, finding
peace at the heart of strife
and a core of stillness in the whirlwind.
Absent, estranged from you, they are unhappy,
crying for you continually
in the night of their exile.

III

To prosper in a strange land
taking cocktails at twilight behind the hotel curtains,
buying cheap and selling dear, acquiring customs,
is to bob up and down like a fisherman's gaudy float
in a swift river.

He who comes back returns
to no ruin of gold nor riot of buds,
moan of doves in falling woods
nor wind of spring shaking the hedgerows,
heartsache, strangling sweetness: pictures
of change, extremes of time and growth,
making razor-sharp the tenses,
waking remembrance, torturing sense;

home-coming, returns only
to the dull green, hider of bones,
changeless, save in the slight spring
when the bush is peopled with flowers,

sparse clusters of white and yellow
on the dull green, like laughter in court;
and in summer when the coasts
bear crimson bloom, sprinkled like blood
on the lintel of the land.

IV

Fairest earth,
fount of life, giver of bodies,
deep well of our delight, breath of desire,
let us come to you
barefoot, as befits love,
as the boy to the trembling girl,
as the child to the mother:
seeking before all things the honesty of substance,
touch of soil and wind and rock,
frost and flower and water,
the honey of the senses, the food
of love's imagining; and the most intimate
touch of love, that turns to being;
deriving wisdom, and the knowledge of necessity;
building thereon, stone by stone,
the rational architecture of truth, to house
the holy flame, that is neither reason nor unreason
but the thing given,
the flame that burns blue in the stillness, hovering
between the green wood of the flesh and the smoke of
death.

Fair earth, we have broken our idols:
and after the days of fire we shall come to you
for the stones of a new temple.

1905–

250

## *Prelude*

THIS short straight sword
I got in Rome
when Gaul's new lord
came tramping home:

It did that grim
old rake to a T—
if it did him,
well, it does me.

Leave the thing of pearls
with silken tassels
to priests and girls
and currish vassals:

Here's no fine cluster
on the hilt, this drab
blade lacks lustre—
but it can stab.

## 251 *Latter-Day Geography Lesson*

THIS, quoth the Eskimo master
was London in English times:
*step out a little bit faster*
*you two young men at the last there*
the Bridge would be on our right hand
and the Tower near where those crows stand—
we struck it you'll recall in Gray's rhymes:
this, quoth the Eskimo master,
was London in English times.

This, quoth the Eskimo master,
was London in English days:
beyond that hill they called Clapham
*boys that swear Master Redtooth I slap'em*
*I dis-tinct-ly heard—you—say—Bastard*
*don't argue*: here boys, ere disaster
overtook her, in splendour there lay
a city held empires in sway
and filled all the earth with her praise:
this, quote the Eskimo master,
was London in English days.

She held, quoth the Eskimo master,
ten million when her prime was full
from here once Britannia cast her
gaze over an Empire vaster
even than ours: look there Woking
stood, I make out, and the Abbey
lies here under our feet *you great babby*
*Swift-and-short do—please—kindly—stop—*
*poking*
*your thumbs through the eyes of that skull.*

252

## *On the Swag*

His body doubled
under the pack
that sprawls untidily
on his old back
the cold wet deadbeat
plods up the track

The cook peers out:
'Oh curse that old lag
here again
with his clumsy swag
made of a dirty old
turnip-bag'

'Bring him in cook
from the grey level sleet
put silk on his body
slippers on his feet,
give him fire
and bread and meat

Let the fruit be plucked
and the cake be iced,
the bed be snug
and the wine be spiced
in the old cove's nightcap:
for this is Christ.'

## 253 *Sonnet of My Everlasting Hand*

THESE atoms that now constitute my hand
have worn the whirlwind, filled the tempest's form
and long have ridden with the nightmare storm,
have swept up Africa in withering sand
and smitten all the seething Spanish land
or charged on China cold and there grown warm
now in a peasant now an emperor: swarm
after unnumbered swarm at Fate's command.

They have grown old in change and interchange
and after long adventurings have come here
to home the mutable spirit of this strange
uncomprehended thing, at once their bier
and womb: for even now they long to range
again that midnight future which I fear.

## 254 *Lament for a Leader*

A chant on the death in 1906 of Richard John Seddon, Prime Minister of New Zealand

*(Translated by James Cowan, 1870-1943).*

Pass on, Hetana, along the quiet ways,
The beloved one of my heart, my shelter and defence
Against the bleak south wind.
My speaking-bird that charmed the assembled tribes,
That swayed the people's councils.
Clothe him, the Father, with the stately garments,
The very fine mats Tahu-whenua and Taharangi,
Place in his ear the precious jewel-stone,
The greenstone kahurangi,
Hang on his breast the koko-tangiwai,
Of glistening lucid jade,
Oh, thou wert a prop within the house;
At the prow of the canoe thou wert,
Ears bent to the plashing sound
Of many paddles
In the waters of Poneke,
In the contentions of the People's Council.
Our prized kaka-bird has gone,
The plumes alone remain.

## 255 *The Conquerors*

THEY have circled the globe, Da Gama. Aye, with thrust bolder
Than any black spar of yours that smote at the stars
And bore the moon for a lamp on your mad ship's shoulder
Their lean, trim greyhounds nose at the harbour bars.
And Afric's breast is dry and barren and cold,
Now sailors hang it no more with their legend gold,
And the trader comes, and the priest, and the cold-eyed press,
And the bare brown girl goes ware of her nakedness.

But when shall they see the island that lay, hull over,
An hour on the lip of the west, and changed, and was gone?
While your sick men babbled of rose-red lake-birds calling,
Of a leaping stream that shone
And an aureole of waters falling,
And you looked on that phantom place with the eyes of a lover?

They have sought out the Ind, Columbus. No more of toiling
Into the glassy trough of the huge green wave,
With your west-crazed ship a toy for the sea's despoiling,
And a coffin of pearl below, and a nameless grave.

And cities are there for port, and a world to plunder—
What if it lack the calm, and the opal wonder,
The gale of spices you dreamed, the ivory stair,
The deep-eyed Cham adream in his golden chair?

But when shall they see again, or know the heart's yearning
You felt one hour of nightfall, when over the trees—
Over the tangled grape-vines, the bleached lorn bays
Left to the wilderness folk since the dawning of days,—
Shafts of sunset struck southward, like fiery keys,
And you dreamed, afar off, the towers of Cipango burning?

They have conquered the peak, Mallory. Where the winds trod
And far below the torrent howled in its lair,
And not another was free of that place but God,
They have seen, they have known, from the ways of the upper air.
Aye, and the wings of the falcon sported in jest
O'er the immaculate glory of Everest,
And little they recked of the sentinel blizzard below,
Of your ghostly footprints, shadowed across the snow.

But when shall they know how, white and roseate and gold,
The great calm flowers of the Silence Woods unfurled
Shine like the angels that guard the end of the world
And the last trail laid for the feet of the overbold?
Till the forest of flowers is mazed with the forest of snow
And the sheer Unattainable lifts through the afterglow . . .

And they who have trod that strong trail, little and lonely,
Lift up their eyes to the heights, knowing only
That the wings of splendour are shod on their toiling feet,
That the oread arms of Death in their clasp are sweet.

*256* *Homing*

The dark heads of flax
Whisper stealthily together,
The pools of golden leaves,
Crisp and golden on the pavement,
Rustle softly, rustle dimly
'Neath the white feet of a wind
That goes walking in the twilight . . .
She is young, and dewy-eyed,
And the daughter of a star . . .
But behind the orange curtains
Dance the sword-sharp golden shadows . . .
Ah, shadows of the flames
On my own hearth lit in welcome!
Quietly, I go in.
The old house knows my footsteps . . .
Chimney nooks, little cupboards,
They love the hands that touch them.
There is nobody to see
(But the laughing rover wind)
How my own house bids me welcome
With sleepy warmth, with dim tears that have gathered
In the dying roses' eyes, that had thought me far away.

## 257 *Journey from New Zealand*

Now as I go between sands red and yellow as poppies
Or across a desert many-breasted like Kali,
Shifting, changing, with navels and sockets of wet deep blue,
I shall see always these things, patient yet obdurate,
And my heart be broken for them, as together we wait the rainfall.
Earth, earth, and the purple thither-dusty grasses,
I shall dream thee fat rains, waiting alone by the desert
Whose white and bitter body makes mock of rain.
Sheep bought for Russia, thick-sided breeding rams,
With the grey grass of the steppes tangled between your teeth,
Do you lift up your heads, short and bellicose, black-nosed
With the round horns curled hard as a wrestler's fists,
Do you lift up your heads, snuffing their northern-watered winds
That drank ice all winter, and seek, however dimly,
The scent of another spring than the Muscovy spring?
(Down in Mackenzie Country
They burn off tussock each year, with the writhing flares
Tied to the galloping horses' tails.)
You cannot remember the snow-fence, black birch rotting in slabs,
Or your weakly protesting cries
As old Donald the shepherd snuggled you into his plaid,

And blinking stiff lashes free, praised his stiff God
For a new lamb, delivered alive in snowtime.
Barking and frisking of collies is gone from you,
Lost honey, dissolved in the vague old murmuring
cells of your brain.
Lift, as you lift your heads snuffing (the train growls
by),
I have a hope you will find their grass acrid; will give
Some maimed defiance out of the weight of your loins.
I too am sold into strangeness,
I too will look out of windows, thinking: 'How fair!'
or 'Strange!'
(Is *ringo* their word for an apple?)
Yet in my heart can only dissolve, re-form,
The circling shapes of New Zealand things.
That place trodden hard
With the white cocks pecking in sun, their combs like
dusty blood
Under old pines, and the serious pungent macrocarpa,
Don't we all know it? Those dropped shafts of a gig
Leathered over from rain; (it is seldom used now,
Seldom the jolting and laughing into market,
One boot high on the old iron step,
And jogging in front, the mare, with solemn dappled
buttocks,
Grizzled lashes blinking over her eyes;
Part of a wold still, cars or no cars);
Ah, I shall speak it between the scorching beats of the
train.
(Change for Berlin at midnight.)
Cracking down cones for fires,

Watching the kea, red outlaw, circling a plain
Scarred with old river-beds . . . the gorse-gold metal
Flaring up at copper metal of underwings.
I climbed a snowpeak once. Who would believe
How the ribbed gold grass was frozen into the snow?
How a fall sprang out and down, singing,
The mountain's woman,
And the dreadful singing of winds blew out at dark?
Down upon Diamond Lake the trout plopped home,
Spreading such lonely circles.
The dying boy mined scheelite,
And the old man polished his well-loved worthless greenstone.

They say the great bird still stalks at Manapouri;
No one has tramped those Sounds.
They speak of huge men with red beards,
(Quickly; this gulping train must start at midnight).

Young crude country, hard as unbroken shell . . .
She was hard to love, and took strength, like a virgin.
Sometimes, in money or dust, the little farms ebbed away,
Dripping between disconsolate fingers like blood
Of that harsh girl, who would never love you.
But in the cities (old days!)
We could live better, warm and safe as the sparrows
Twittering through the evenings like young sparrows.
Ours was a city, like any city,
But with more, perhaps, of sea and cloud, not long loved.
November tar, ripening, blackened our sandals.

Our city had doorways, too many shut.
Morning and evening, facing the rampant crimson
brutes of the light,
Nobody had the beautiful strength to decree:
'Leave your doors open, morning and evening—
Leave your gates wide to the stranger.'
So ours was a city, like any city, but fair.
At seven (still light) the children snuggled down
Like rabbits. The rest sat on in the lamplight,
Sat still or spoke words by their failures.
There is nothing else to tell, but the catkin grass
Strung on pale wires, close to the sea.
Our great rocks fluked like whales;
We loved the dead coal-hulks, did not despise them.
Money was nothing, balloons were much,
The grey mists quiet-breasted as doves.
I knew a green place where the light looked more like
trees,
Trees more like diffused and stilly light.
(Green, green be upon your eyes; red in my heart,
The world's troubled colour; for I must awaken.)
Once in the rose parterres my mother stood still and
said:
'Man, woman and child; man, woman and child.'
She was born with a restive heart, but grew old.

Ah, too many sparrows twittering into the dawn . . .
The deep, blue and unborn colour.
The dawn should be men's, not your little voices.
It was always too soon to awake, I remember now,
But the world, this and that world,
And the Templar stars in their order said: 'Rise and
go.'

## 258 *Landfall in Unknown Seas**

I

Simply by sailing in a new direction
You could enlarge the world.
You picked your captain,
Keen on discoveries, tough enough to make them,
Whatever vessels could be spared from other
More urgent service for a year's adventure;
Took stock of the more probable conjectures
About the Unknown to be traversed, all
Guesses at golden coasts and tales of monsters
To be digested into plain instructions
For likely and unlikely situations.

All this resolved and done, you launched the whole
On a fine morning, the best time of year,
Skies widening and the oceanic furies
Subdued by summer illumination; time
To go and to be gazed at going
On a fine morning, in the Name of God
Into the nameless waters of the world.

O you had estimated all the chances
Of business in those waters, the world's waters
Yet unexploited.
But more than the sea-empire's
Cannon, the dogs of bronze and iron barking
From Timor to the Straits, backed up the challenge.

*Written on request for the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs to celebrate the ter-centennial of the discovery of New Zealand by Abel Tasman on December 13th, 1642.

Between you and the South an older enmity
Lodged in the searching mind, that would not tolerate
So huge a hegemony of ignorance.
There, where your Indies had already sprinkled
Their tribes like ocean rains, you aimed your voyage;
Like them invoked your God, gave seas to history
And islands to new hazardous to-morrows.

II

Suddenly exhilaration
Went off like a gun, the whole
Horizon, the long chase done,
Hove to. There was the seascape
Crammed with coast, surprising
As new lands will, the sailor
Moving on the face of the waters,
Watching the earth take shape
Round the unearthly summits, brighter
Than its emerging colour.

Yet this, no far fool's errand,
Was less than the heart desired,
In its old Indian dream
The glittering gulfs ascending
Past palaces and mountains
Making one architecture.
Here the uplifted structure,
Peak and pillar of cloud—
O splendour of desolation—reared
Tall from the pit of the swell,
With a shadow, a finger of wind, forbade
Hopes of a lucky landing.

Always to islanders danger
Is what comes over the sea;
Over the yellow sands and the clear
Shallows, the dull filament
Flickers, the blood of strangers:
Death discovered the Sailor
O in a flash, in a flat calm
A clash of boats in the bay
And the day marred with murder.
The dead required no further
Warning to keep their distance;
The rest, noting the failure,
Pushed on with a reconnaissance
To the north; and sailed away.

III

Well, home is the Sailor, and that is a chapter
In a schoolbook, a relevant yesterday
We thought we knew all about, being much apter
To profit, sure of our ground,
No murderers mooring in our Golden Bay.

But now there are no more islands to be found
And the eye scans risky horizons of its own
In unsettled weather, and murmurs of the drowned
Haunt their familiar beaches—
Who navigates us towards what unknown

But not improbable provinces? Who reaches
A future down for us from the high shelf
Of spiritual daring? Not those speeches
Pinning on the Past like a decoration
For merit that congratulates itself,

O not the self-important celebration
Or most painstaking history, can release
The current of a discoverer's elation
And silence the voices saying,
'Here is the world's end where wonders cease.'

Only by a more faithful memory, laying
On him the half-light of a diffident glory,
The Sailor lives, and stands beside us, paying
Out into our time's wave
The stain of blood that writes an island story.

## 259 *House and Land*

WASN'T this the site, asked the historian,
Of the original homestead?
Couldn't tell you, said the cowman:
I just live here, he said,
Working for old Miss Wilson,
Since the old man's been dead.

Moping under the bluegums
The dog trailed his chain
From the privy as far as the fowlhouse
And back to the privy again,
Feeling the stagnant afternoon
Quicken with the smell of rain.

There sat old Miss Wilson,
With her pictures on the wall,
The baronet uncle, mother's side,
And one she called The Hall;
Taking tea from a silver pot
For fear the house might fall.

She's all of eighty said the cowman
Down at the milking-shed.
I'm leaving here next winter,
Too bloody quiet he said.

The spirit of exile, wrote the historian,
Is strong in the people still.

He reminds me rather, said Miss Wilson,
Of Harriet's youngest, Will.

The cowman, home from the shed, went drinking
With the rabbiter home from the hill.

The sensitive nor'west afternoon
Collapsed, and the rain came;
The dog crept into his barrel,
Looking lost and lame.
But you can't attribute to either
Awareness of what great gloom
Stands in a land of settlers
With never a soul at home.

## 260 *Self-Portrait*

A WISTFUL camera caught this four-year-old
But could not stare him into wistfulness;
He holds the toy that he is given to hold:
A passionate failure or a staled success

Look back into their likeness while I look
With pity not self-pity at the plain
Mechanical image that I first mistook
For my own image; there, timid or vain,

Semblance of my own eyes my eyes discern
Casting on mine as I cast back on these
Regard not self-regard: till the toy turn
Into a lover clasped, into wide seas,

The salt or visionary wave, and the days heap
Sorrow upon sorrow for all he could not keep.

## DENIS GLOVER

1912–

### 261 *The Road Builders*

Rolling along far roads on holiday wheels
now wonder at their construction, the infinite skill
that balanced the road to the gradient of the hill,
the precision, the planning, the labour it all reveals.

An unremembered legion of labourers did this,
scarring the stubborn clay, fighting the tangled bush,
blasting the adamant, stemming the unbridled rush
of the torrent in flood, bridging each dark abyss.

Their tools were pitiful beside the obdurate strength
of the land:
crosswire of the theodolite, pick-point, curved shovel,
small tremor of a touched-off charge; but above all
the skill and strength, admirable in patience, of the
hand.

These men we should honour above the managers of
banks.
They pitted their flesh and their cunning against odds
unimagined by those who turn wordily the first sods.
And on the payroll their labour stands unadorned by
thanks.

Who they are, or where, we do not know. Anonymous they die
or drift away; some start the job again; some in a country pub
recount old epic deeds amid that unheeding hubbub,
telling of pitiless hills, wet mountain roads where rusting barrows lie.

## 262 *Harry Singing*

Once the days were clear
Like mountains in water,
The mountains were always there
And the mountain water;

And I was a fool leaving
Good land to moulder,
Leaving the fences sagging
And the old man older
To follow my wild thoughts
Away over the hill,
Where there is only the world
And the world's ill,
*sings Harry.*

263

## *The Magpies*

When Tom and Elizabeth took the farm
The bracken made their bed,
And *Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle*
The magpies said.

Tom's hand was strong to the plough,
Elizabeth's lips were red,
And *Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle*
The magpies said.

Year in year out they worked
While the pines grew overhead,
And *Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle*
The magpies said.

But all the beautiful crops soon went
To the mortgage-man instead,
And *Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle*
The magpies said.

Elizabeth is dead now (it's years ago),
Old Tom went light in the head;
And *Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle*
The magpies said.

The farm's still there. Mortgage corporations
Couldn't give it away.
And *Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle*
The magpies say.

1913–

## 264 *Green Lions*

The bay is gouged by the wind.
In the jagged hollows green lions crouch,
And stretch,
And slouch,
And sudden with spurting manes and a glitter of haunches
Charge at the shore
And rend the sand and roar.

And inland, in offices and banks
Though trams clang down and heavy stone resists
The mutter of distant carnage still persists,
And men denied the jungle of young years

Grow taut, and clench their fists.

## 265 *Heart of the World*

I feel now like some mariner who lies
Too tired for sleep upon his narrow bed,
While overhead
The stars are crackling in the glimmering skies,
And sea beneath is ebony fired with green.
While so he lies, so utterly serene,
He hears the engines beat,
Thud and repeat,
In perfect rhythm, in lovely shuddering time.
Their steady rhyme
Seems far below him, far away
In some vast chasm . . . a great machine
Throbbing and throbbing, far away.

And so upon your warm white breast I lie
In utter peace, in rich abandonment.
O heart content!
There is no terror in the sputtering sky
Nor in the oily bay that's stabbed with green.
Now while I lie, your heart beats quick and keen;
I hear it darkly pound,
Thud and resound,
In perfect rhythm, in lovely shuddering time.
Its steady rhyme
Seems far below me, far away
In reeling space . . . a great machine
Throbbing and throbbing, far away.

## 266 *Watching the Milking*

I

In the ashen evening a bird's song spouts in silver
That swirls to the shed where an engine spits and chugs.
The yard is muddy. Sunk to the knees the cows
Await the sucking cup, the hand that tugs,
Content and chewing, and not afraid of man
Or the weird machine that robs their swollen dugs.

II

As torchlight stabs a pool and splits the stillness
The madness of motherhood tore these gentle eyes;
And the fawn cows that stand so quietly in the yard
Felt tides of ancient passion in them rise,
And knew great tenderness, were wild and savage,
And bawled in torment to the lost calf's cries.

III

'They soon forget. . . . This happens every year.'
The light fades, and the thrush no longer sings.
'And every year, and every year, and always.'
A match glows. The odour of warm milk brings
Remembrance of hay, and woodsmoke, and horses; and then
Of pine-trees and scented hair, and magical things.

IV

The hills grow dark, are monstrous upon the earth—
Where leads the trail beyond their sprawling weight?
Day is a broken dream, and night fantastic;
Ghost in a ghostly world alone and late,
I might have been watching the cold craters of the moon,
Or Pithecanthrope gesturing to his mate.

## EVE LANGLEY

### 267 *Native-Born**

In a white gully among fungus red
Where serpent logs lay hissing at the air,
I found a kangaroo. Tall, dewy, dead,
So like a woman, she lay silent there.
Her ivory hands, black-nailed, crossed on her breast,
Her skin of sun and moon hues, fallen cold.
Her brown eyes lay like rivers come to rest
And death had made her black mouth harsh and old.

*Eve Langley was born in Australia, but has lived in New Zealand for some years.

Beside her in the ashes I sat deep
And mourned for her, but had no native song
To flatter death, while down the ploughlands steep
Dark young Camelli whistled loud and long,
'Love, liberty and Italy are all.'
Broad golden was his breast against the sun.
I saw his wattle whip rise high and fall
Across the slim mare's flanks, and one by one
She drew the furrows after her as he
Flapped like a gull behind her, climbing high,
Chanting his oaths and lashing soundingly,
While from the mare came once a blowing sigh.
The dew upon the kangaroo's white side
Had melted. Time was whirling high around,
Like the thin wommera, and from heaven wide
God, the bull-roarer, made continuous sound.
Incarnate, lay my country by my hand:
Her long hot days, bushfires and speaking rains,
Her mornings of opal and the copper band
Of smoke around the sunlight on the plains.
Globed in fire bodies the meat-ants ran
To taste her flesh and linked us as we lay,
For ever Australian, listening to a man
From careless Italy, swearing at our day.
When, golden-lipped, the eagle-hawks came down
Hissing and whistling to eat of lovely her,
And the blowflies with their shields of purple brown
Plied hatching to and fro across her fur,
I burnt her with the logs, and stood all day
Among the ashes, pressing home the flame
Till woman, logs and dreams were scorched away,
And native with night, that land from where they came.

1926–

## 268 *The Track*

As we climbed on the rough track
Up through the bush to the clear ground beyond
We heard the sudden patter of rain on fern-frond
And turned to see the heavy sky blue-black.

So we came out of the rain
To shelter of trees, and looking out at the wild
And darkened valley, I remembered how as a child
I had stood thus behind a window pane.

You leaned back from your coat
Trustfully, with your head against my knees,
And big drops fell on your upturned face from the
trees
As I bent down and kissed your mouth and throat.

There was little more than the sound
Of the creek below, my hand laid on your breast
A moment; but enormous quiet pressed
Upon me there out of the air and ground.

Later the rain ceased
And we rose from the crushed ferns and walked down
The track again. Over the foggy town
Clouds dividing showed a glint of blue from the east.

## 269 *Haast Pass*

In the dense bush all leaves and bark exude
The odour of mortality; for plants
Accept their death like stones
Rooted for ever in time's torrent bed.

Return from here. We have nothing to learn
From the dank falling of fern spores
Or the pure glacier blaze that melts
Down mountains, flowing to the Tasman.

This earth was never ours. Remember
Rather the tired faces in the pub
The children who have never grown. Return
To the near death, the loves like garden flowers.

## *270* *Farmhand*

You will see him light a cigarette
At the hall door careless, leaning his back
Against the wall, or telling some new joke
To a friend, or looking out into the secret night.

But always his eyes turn
To the dance floor and the girls drifting like flowers
Before the music that tears
Slowly in his mind an old wound open.

His red sunburnt face and hairy hands
Were not made for dancing or love making
But rather the earth wave breaking
To the plough, and crops slow-growing as his mind.

He has no girl to run her fingers through
His sandy hair, and giggle at his side
When Sunday couples walk. Instead
He has his awkward hopes, his envious dreams to yarn to.

But ah in harvest watch him
Forking stooks, effortless and strong—
Or listening like a lover to the song
Clear, without fault, of a new tractor engine.

1909–

## 271 *Forerunners*

Not by us was the unrecorded stillness
Broken, and in their monumental dawn
The rocks, the leaves unveiled;
Those who were before us trod first the soil

And named the bays and mountains; while round them spread
The indefinable currents of the human,
That still about their chosen places
Trouble the poignant air.

But their touch was light; warm in their hearts holding
The land's image, they had no need to impress themselves
Like conquerors, scarring it with vain memorials.
They had no fear of being forgotten.

In the face of our different coming they retreated,
But without panic, not disturbing the imprint
Of their living upon the air, which continued
To speak of them to the rocks and the sombre, guarded lakes.

The earth holds them
As the mountains hold the shadows by day
In their powerful repose, only betrayed by a lingering
Twilight in the hooded ravines.

Behind our quickness, our shallow occupation of the easier
Landscape, their unprotesting memory
Mildly hovers, surrounding us with perspective,
Offering soil for our rootless behaviour.

*272* *Falling Asleep*

Flow darkness in
Possess invisibly my hands and eyes
Be my breath and be
Stillness also
Where all remembering ceases
Where hope and anguish
Sink at last together
And I become
The night I would not see or know.

*273* *The Islands*

Always, in these islands, meeting and parting
Shake us, making tremulous the salt-rimmed air;
Divided and perplexed the sea is waiting,
Birds and fishes visit us and disappear.

The future and the past stand at our doors,
Beggars who for one look of trust will open
Worlds that can answer our unknown desires,
Entering us like rain and sun to ripen.

Remindingly beside the quays, the white
Ships lie smoking; and from their haunted bay
The godwits vanish towards another summer.
Everywhere in light and calm the murmuring
Shadow of departure; distance looks our way;
And none knows where he will lie down at night.

## 274 *Vires Vitae*

Eat of my bread, Wind,
Hungry Wind, eat.
Snow, pile upon me,
Warm your white feet.

I have a sun in my heart,
I have a fire in my breast,
Rest on me, tired Sea,
Tired Sea, rest.

Warm your small fingers, Rain,
You are so cold!
Lean on me, lean on me,
Time, you are old.

## 275 *The Quarrel*

Many years ago I quarrelled with my cousin—
Many years ago my cousin quarrelled with me.
Do not ask me why or what it was about,
Something over which we two could not agree—
I have long forgotten.

My cousin ran home and told his parents,
I ran home and told mine,
And since then our two families have been enemies—
Since then it has been angry looks and loud voices.
Our Anna must not speak to their Pita—
Their Pita must not play with our Anna!

They quarrelled, quarrelled, quarrelled—
About land rights and whakapapas,
About the living and about the dead,

About mutton birds and dried eels,
And who owned the gum dug out of the swamp—
About the cow that strayed from the pakeha's farm
And that each said the other had stolen—
They quarrelled, yes, even over a telegraph pole.

When the old chief died they went together
To the tangi, and together wept,
Yes, they even rubbed noses and cut themselves for sadness.
But when the dead was buried and the big feast over
They quarrelled louder than ever
Across a kit of cold cooked kumaras.

They cannot worship God in the same church
Because their dark looks and mutterings
Distract the minister.
When my old father meets my cousin's old father
He says, 'Tena koe, Enemy!'
And my cousin's old father spits and shouts, 'Bah!'

As to my cousin and me—
Well, we made up our quarrel the same day it happened,
As children do.
When I meet my cousin's children I pat them on the head,
When he meets mine he smiles and gives them presents.
But to me he says, 'Ah, Anna! Anna! If only we had not quarrelled!
Ah, Anna! Anna! If only we had told them that day
That it was nothing, nothing at all . . . it is too late now!'

## WILLIAM HART-SMITH

1911–

### 276 *Joshua, Mahomet*

When you stretch out your arms in the desert,
All you can touch is sky,
And when you stretch out
The arms of thought in the desert,
God blows gently across
The spread tips of fingers. Joshua,
Mahomet, withdrawing the ventured hand
And placing it upon the heart,
Afterwards found
It had grown a sword in a fist,
Even that worshipful hand.

## ANTON VOGT

1914–

### 277 *Love*

She said darling, but there was no answer.

The walls had forgotten the meaning of laughter;
and in the windows the glass was opaque
to a mock sun . . .

She said darling, but the voices of children
were silent.

The ghosts of the unborn had departed;
they had waited too long.

ANTON VOGT

## 278 *Kapital*

A KAURI so thick and tall and old
it seemed that it must stand forever;
but two men cleaned it up in a day
with an axe and a saw and two pints of sweat.

A ship so big and proud and handsome
that it would have made Noah's eyes water;
but with a couple of charges of TNT
it didn't even make a hole in the sea.

DONALD McDONALD*

1912–1942

## 279 *Sidi Reszegh*

CHILDREN are born in the land of the green grass springing,
Knowing the voice of the streams and the rain's caresses,
Knowing the scent of the flowers, and the larks' sweet singing,
Feeling the west wind cool in their bright young tresses.

But this is the Desert—Earth's bones to the old sun lying,
A fit place this for the ancient passions' burning;
And men who were children in sweet green lands are dying,
Bone of their bodies to bone of the Earth returning.

*Donald McDonald, a young farmer, was killed in the Second World War.

Bare belief their bodies through steel hail urges;
If need be, here I'll die, my spirit braving
The darkness; but Ah, how the child in my heart upsurges,
Yearning for streams, for the larks, and the green grass waving.

## 280 *Time*

Upon the benchy hillside
Where hoggets love to lie,
With noses pointed to the wind
And half-closed eye,
I walked alone on Sundays,
And wished my love was nigh.
For oh! the hours went slower
Than the moon goes in the sky.

Upon the benchy hillside
Raked with wind and sun,
Where the gray hawk hovers
And little rabbits run,
My love and I did linger
A few short hours;
But time slipped through our fingers,
As the wind slips through the flowers!

## 281 *When all the Land's Dark Forests*

When all the land's dark forests
Are felled—I tell thee then,
Dark growth will still need felling
Within the minds of men.

When all the fields are cleared
And ploughed—I tell thee then,
Still shall fields need ploughing
Within the souls of men.

When every field is harrowed
And sown—I tell thee then,
Seeds shall still need sowing
Within the hearts of men.

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